The *Sim*prano's · Diablo II: hands on! · The Son of *Sim* · Dirty online tricks

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WARCRAFT III

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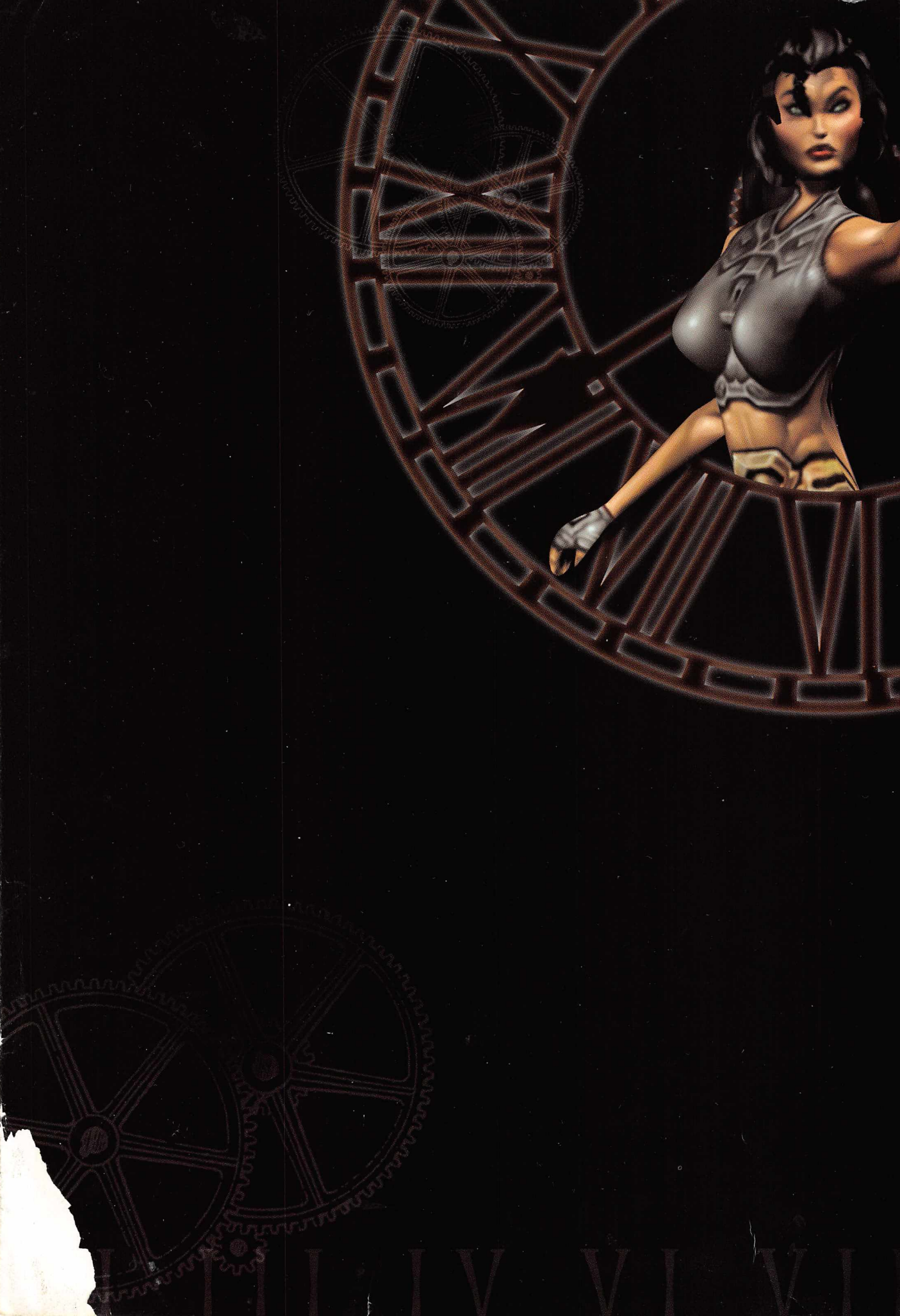

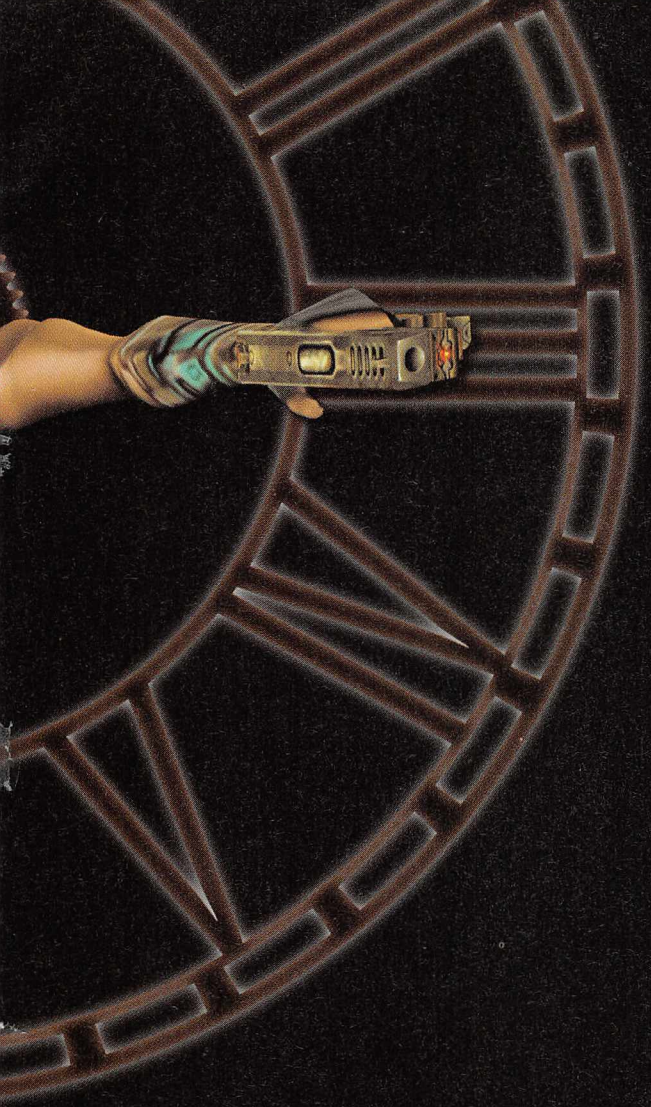

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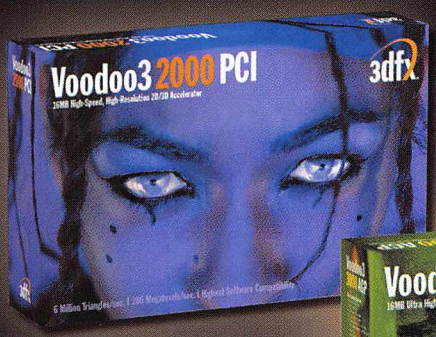
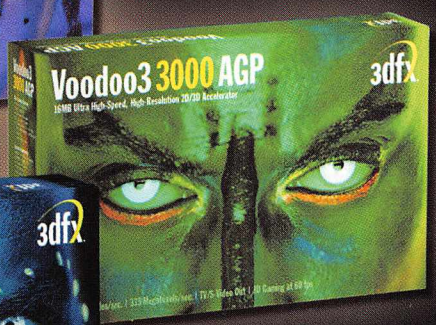
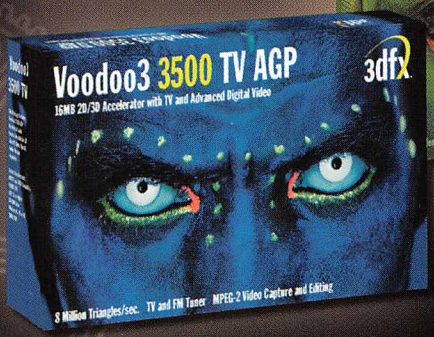
g, not just action, but a deeply
d where choices affect every moment.
thing.







Eidos on 3dfx.
So Powerful, It's Kind of Ridiculous.

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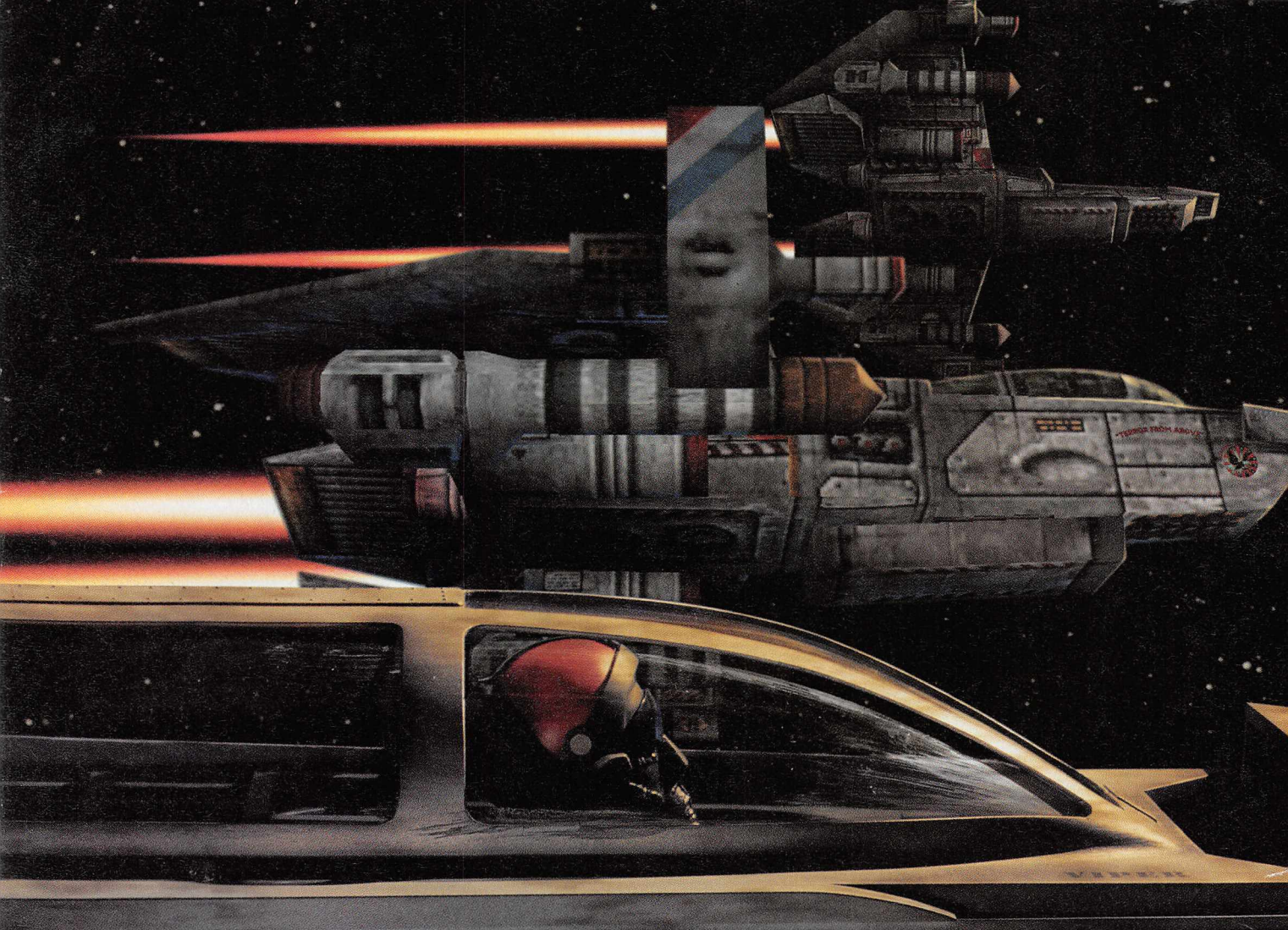

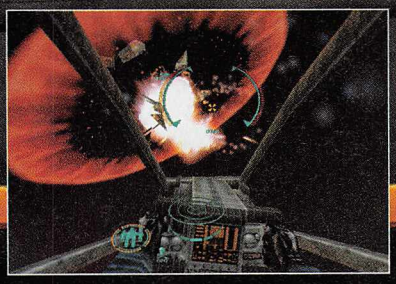

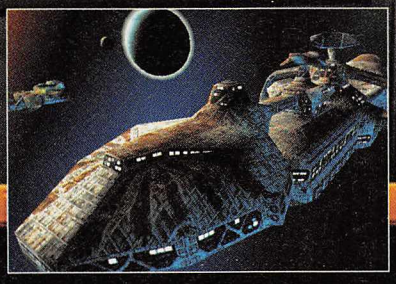

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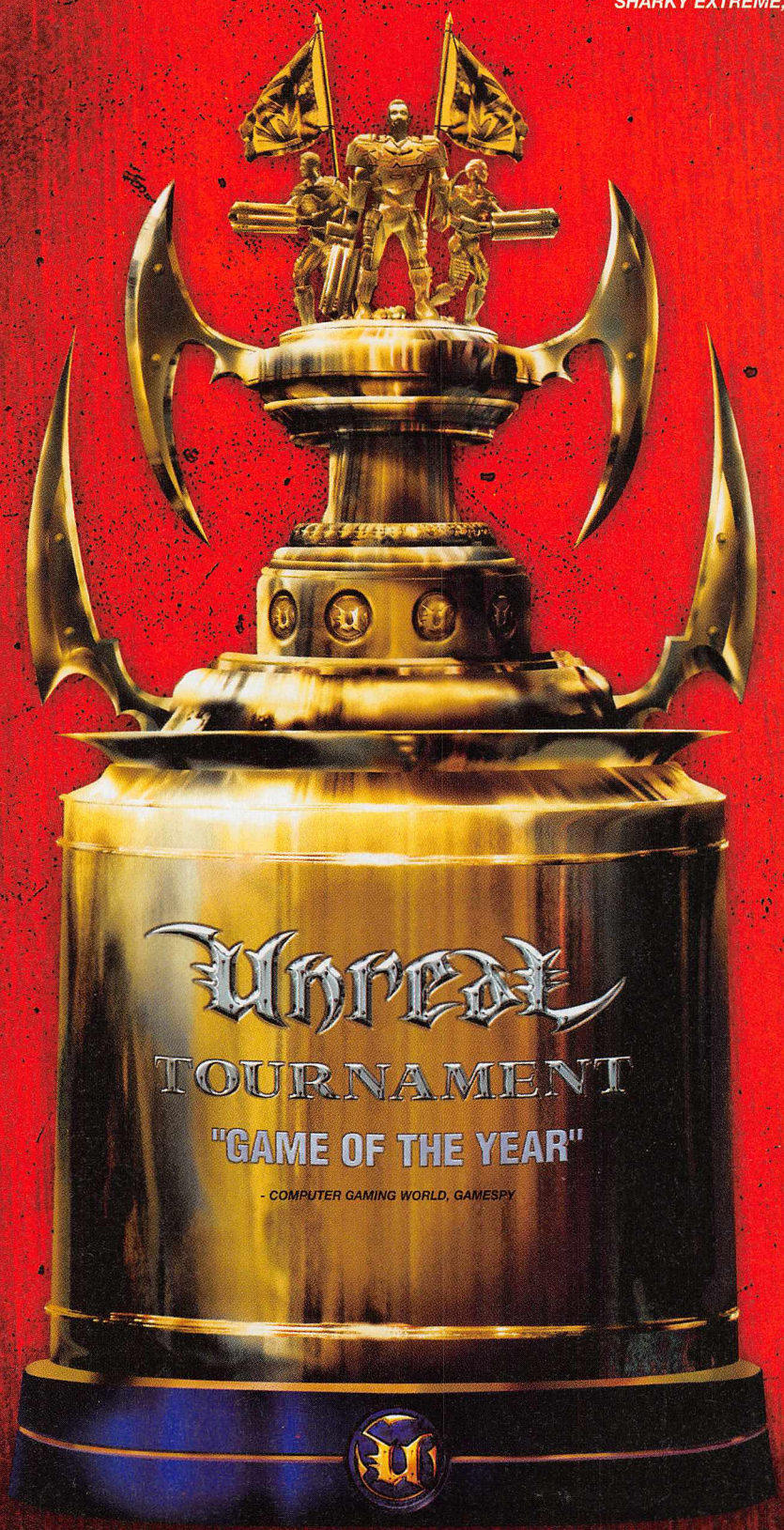

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Digital Anvil

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FEATURES

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WARCRAFT III

It's just the best frickin' game we've seen all year and we've only got exclusive information on the fourth race, combat system, new characters, and some wild guesses at the last two races. There really isn't anything more to read here. Move along to page 17

30

HOMICIDE: Death in games

Ever wondered what the medical definition of "fragged into chunks of meat" might be? Here's your chance to witness the 13 worst ways to die in games. Plus, find out what the hell they'd put on the toe tag. *Warning: This feature incorporates big medical words that may cause nausea. Read at your own risk. Management assumes no responsiblity for your physical or mental health*

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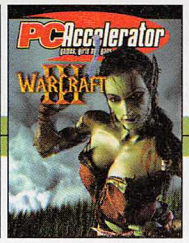
www.DailyRadar.com



ON THE COVER
Beautifully rendered green breasts courtesy of Blizzard Entertainment. Bold statements courtesy of **PCXL**. Together, it equals the cover that made you buy this damn magazine — aren't you glad? Don't answer 'til you read this rag. Then, only answer if you can say something nice.

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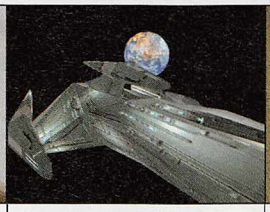

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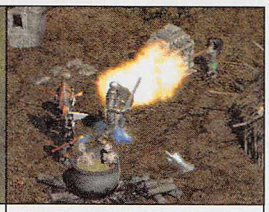

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MONEY SHOTS

58 MONEY SHOTS
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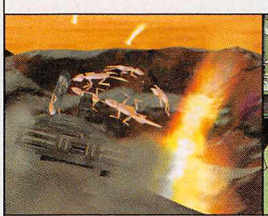

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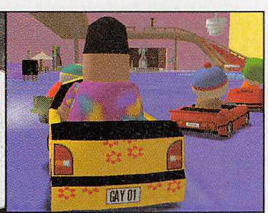

82 SOUTH PARK RALLY
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Mike *proves* he is a fool by arguing that choice is bad. Matt proves that he is still the new guy by thinking someone gives a damn about his opinion

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12
Matt and Kyle have been at it again. We're not sure what "it" is, but check out the disc and maybe you can figure it out. Anyone else giving you the *Croc 2* demo? Didn't think so

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IN HONOR OF OUR NEWEST SECTION, "MONEY SHOTS"...
We give you the biggest stars in our favorite industry (other than gaming, of course): The Porn Business. And you can find them all right here in **PCXL**! Ok, so we couldn't get any of them to actually pose for our little magazine, but here are their names ... Sylvia Sain, Lisa Ann, Nikki Dial, Jenna Jameson, Barbie Blake, Roxanne Hill, Celeste, Chasey Lain, Leena Darrian, Raquel Darrian, Savannah, Sindee Coxx, Leanna Hardcore, Juli Ashton, Shyla Fox, Midori, Leanna Heart, Biaggio, Jasmine St. Clair, Shelby Stevens, Stacy Valentine, Kylie Ireland, Crystal Wilder, PJ Sparxx. We had no luck in getting them — maybe you will. Look 'em up in the phone book for all we care.

"ACTION GAME OF THE YEAR"
- GAMESPOT, WELL-ROUNDED ENTERTAINMENT

"MULTIPLAYER GAME OF THE YEAR"
- C/NET GAMECENTER

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1

General Veers

Served: Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul, Battle of Hoth (wounded), Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (captured).

2

2nd Lieutenant Gorga

Served: Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed).

3

Sergeant Krung

Served: Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (missing in action).

4

Sergeant Major Corillon

Served: Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Sarapin (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed).

5

Lieutenant Major Antilles

Served: Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (wounded).

6

1st Lieutenant Spiker

Served: Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (promoted).

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EVERYDAY IS APRIL FOOL'S AT PCXL

Because this is our April issue, we thought long and hard about doing "wacky" April fools hi-jinx like every other boring, retread game magazine will surely do. When we were brainstorming (that bit that comes just before blamestorming) we realized that we pretty much do that every issue. We feared that trying to make our magazine just a bit more outrageous could result in hysterical blindness throughout the Midwest.

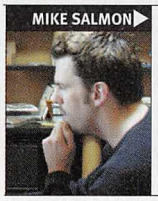
Don't get me wrong, I think it's great that our competition tries to entertain its readers in at least one issue a year. I applaud them for the depressingly unoriginal thought. Here at **PCXL**, we'll just keep throwing together our usual collection of interesting, creative, fun, and eye-grabbing articles. Unfortunately, we're probably (God and sleep-depravity willing) going to create the same vibrant magazine (with all new content, of course) next month. If you tire of thoroughly enjoying a magazine from cover to cover each and every issue, then you probably have no use for **PCXL**. Go buy our competition (we're not naming any names here, but you know who they are). They are sure to bore you at least 11 months out of the year — guaranteed.

Enjoy the issue, read the whole damn thing (you already paid for it, you might as well get your money's worth), and let me know what moved you, what inspired you, what inspired something to move inside you, and what the hell we can do to make you come back next issue.

MIKE SALMON, *Editor in Chief*

THE TEAM

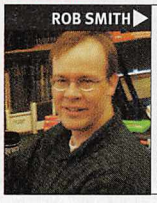
EDITOR IN CHIEF



MIKE SALMON

EMAIL ···› mike@pcxl.com
PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› When pigs fly or when Eidos forces them to; whichever comes first
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› Every computer he gets near is infected with some sort of "no longer working" status, which he usually blames on the latest new guy
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Pong!*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Quake III, Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001, UT, AOE II*

EXECUTIVE EDITOR



ROB SMITH

EMAIL ···› rob@pcxl.com
PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› March 2000, and when it comes out it will be game of the year (insert noise of crackpipe bubbling)
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› Spent only free time in the past month writing a technical gaming book ... sad, really
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Dungeon*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Quake III, Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001, Fix The Hard Drive*

MANAGING EDITOR

PHILIP MAYARD

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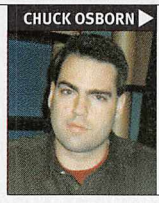
PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› "I don't know, and I don't care, but it sure as hell better be done by deadline or heads will roll!"
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› Believes that editors are basically honest ... when giving out deadlines. He is learning
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Pac Man*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Ms. Pac Man*

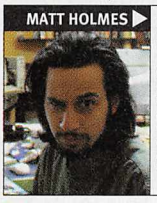
ASSISTANT EDITOR



CHUCK OSBORN

EMAIL ···› chuck@pcxl.com
PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› I hope they continue to delay it — without *Daikatana* what the hell would we make fun of?
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› Left town to go on vacation the day we were writing his bio – we think he's attending a *Star Trek* convention or something similarly geeky
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Pong!*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Quake III, Tread Marks*

STILL THE NEW GUY



MATT HOLMES

EMAIL ···› matt@pcxl.com
PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› When these bastards quit calling me "new guy" (AKA "never")
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› He really, truly believes that someone gives a damn about his crack-addled thoughts
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Pong!*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Quake III, Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001, UT, AOE II*

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GIA DECARLO

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PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› "Late! How can I be late? I even took the sugar ones"
WHY SHE'S A FOOL ···› Think about it. She works at this magazine, now that is foolish
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Doctor*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Doctor, Lawyer, Actor, CEO, Entrepenuer,* and *Head of International Corporate Monopoly*

ART DIRECTOR

KYLE LEBOEUF

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PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› When I make my grand return to the art world (AKA "never")
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› He's leaving the coolness that is **PCXL**. What more proof could you want?
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Ultima III*
NOW PLAYING ···› *Whatever game IT types play to pass time when they should be fixing our computers*

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

ERIC SMITH

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PREDICTION FOR EVENTUAL DAIKATANA RELEASE DATE ···› Right after these other fools admit that *UT* is better than *Q3A*
WHY HE'S A FOOL ···› Just listen to him hopelessly defending *UT*. It's really quite sad, isn't it?
FIRST GAME EVER PLAYED ···› *Pong!*
NOW PLAYING ···› *UT, AOE II, Baldur's Gate, Quark 3 Arena, Photoshop Tournament, Age of Illustrator II*

SPOTTHEFAKEAD

Find the ad in **PCXL** that seems less than right and mail it to imnofool@pcxl.com to qualify for "fabulous" prizes.

FEBRUARY FAKE AD ···› *Mac Gamer*
MOCKING ···› Macs, *PC Gamer*, Imagine Media
MARCH FAKE AD ···› *Extreme Dwarf Tossing*
MOCKING ···› "Extreme" games, dwarf tossing, good taste
***Fabulous prizes this month =** *Wheel Of Time, Urban Chaos,* and Mike's old notepad, complete with doodles

!WARNING!

This magazine is intended for people with a sense of humor, intelligence, and a brain that can tell the difference between right and wrong. If you don't fit this discription then kindly hand this magazine to someone who does. No matter who you are, there are bound to be several references in the magazine that seem to be making fun of you and your beliefs. These are jokes, sarcasms, ironies ... and besides we weren't talking about YOU — it was one of those other people.

www.DailyRadar.com
Might be a good idea to cryogenically freeze last issue's *Daikatana* strategy for safe keeping

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Gia DeCarlo	token girl

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Imagine Media is aimed at people who have a passion. A passion for games. For business. For computers. Or for the Internet. Those are passions we share. Our goal is to feed your passion with the greatest magazines, websites, and CD-ROMs imaginable. (*all this passion talk is making me hot, Ed*)

We love to innovate, we love to have fun, and we have a cast-iron rule always to deliver spectacular editorial value. That means doing whatever it takes to give you the information you need. With any luck, we'll even make you smile sometimes ... thanks for joining us.

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Why it works: It's proven that people love their Bible, and people love games. Why not put them in one holy package?

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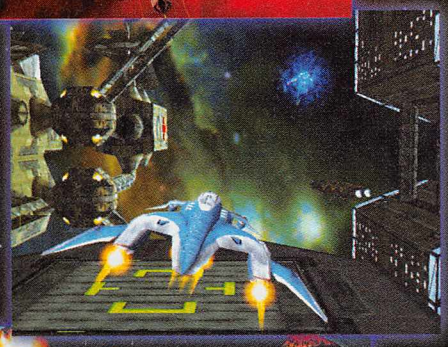

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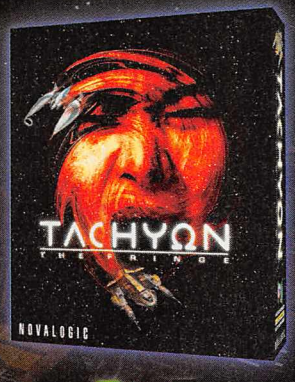

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THE DISC HAS LIFT-OFF

WHAT IS THE SOUND OF ONE DISC LAUNCHING?

The DDR (Demo Decision Room) had been quiet for weeks. No one knew what had transpired inside its twisted walls. But one thing was clear. Something strange and new was happening. Passing Imagine employees whispered to each other in curious fear about the eerie flashes and subsonic rumblings coming from this terrifying chamber. Packages of lipstick and Mach III razors were delivered to the door, only to vanish moments later. Then one morning, just before the "Ed Lee isn't just late, he's gone" grieving ritual, the doors opened and that sick bitch Matt came out, announcing the birth of a new disc section — "MONEY SHOTS!" Enjoy it, or we'll send his twisted ass to your house and see how *you* like it.

Why our disc is better:

PREDATOR DISC ···> You can take your friend's head off with it
PCXL DISC ···> Has hot pics of Stevie "KillCreek" Case on it
CONCLUSION ···> Dead friends can't compete with mega babes

TRON DISC ···> Stores all the information about who you are
PCXL DISC ···> Have you seen the *Croc 2* demo yet? Alright, then
CONCLUSION ···> Do you really want to know "who" you are?

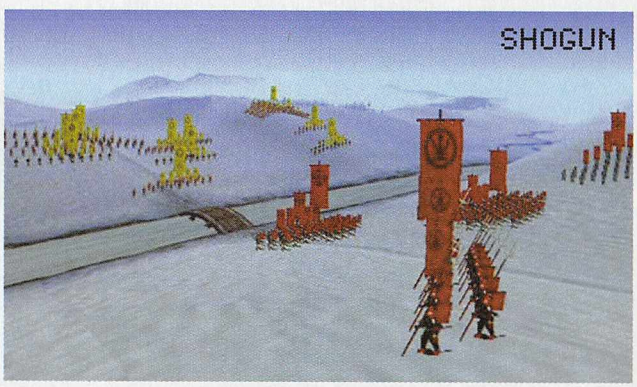
OLYMPICS DISCUS ···> They played *naked* in the old days
PCXL DISC ···> You *want* to play with this thing naked
CONCLUSION ···> Naked is fine in the privacy of your own house

LEGEND

DEMO	A/V	TOOLS
PATCHES	MAPS	RATING

DEMOS	
D	NOX (MULTIPLAYER/CONJURER)
D	BATTLECRUISER 3000 (V - 2.09)
D	CODENAME: EAGLE
D	CROC 2
D	IMPERIUM GALACTICA 2
D	METAL FATIGUE
D	SHOGUN
D	TEST DRIVE 6
D	TREAD MARKS

PATCHES	
	AGE OF WONDERS 1.31
	NOCTURNE PATCH 2
	SWAT 3 1.1
	PLANESCAPE TORMENT 1.1
	TRIBES 1.10
	ULTIMA IV 1.18 (LIKE IT MATTERS)
	SKINS: Q3A - PMS, SCOTTYFOX, WEDGIE
	UT - CAPTAIN AMERICA, FEMFATAL, SWAT


SHOGUN

NOX

You thought we were just screwing around. Joke's on you, because we loaded this disc with all sorts of new widgets and doodads that'll make the other guy squinch up in jealousy. While he's getting the gas face, you can click on Money Shots under X-Tra and see what we mean!

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95/98, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 5.0, MOUSE, 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

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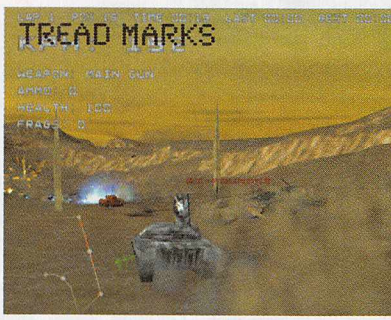
THE DISC MINI-FAQ

Q: Where's the frickin *Ultima: Ascension* demo, damnit?
A: McAffee VirusScan detected it on our server and repaired it right into the recycle bin. We do have the patch for the "game" (and we use that term loosely), though.

Q: How come you didn't put my home-made game "Deathmatch" on the PCXL disc?
A: Because it was so pathetic we burst into laughter and choked on our pizza. Attempted Homicide is a crime, pal, don't forget.

Q: What's a money shot?
A: In the real world, it's when a guy in a porno movie pops his top so you can see his magic ... but in our case it is a collection of beautified new screenshots for you to check out. They might make you pop your top, though.



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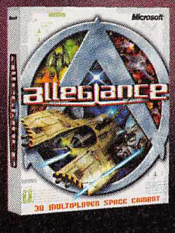

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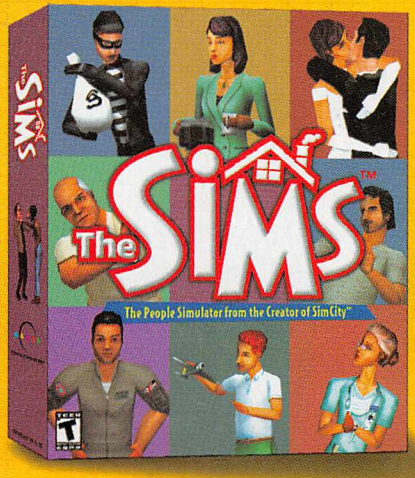

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And in the third installment, Blizzard created ...

WarCraft III

Just who the hell do the people at Blizzard think they are? So they've had some success with this PC game development thing — a million seller here, a couple of million seller there, worldwide recognition, and the most impenetrable reputation in the computer and video gaming industry. So now they think that they can rewrite the design book? Then again, who's to argue? The company has decided to create a whole new genre complete with its own handy little acronym, set in a universe that's already captured the hearts and minds of millions of gamers. If ever there was a "sure thing" in this flaky industry of ours, *WarCraft III* is it.

So let's give a warm gaming industry welcome to the RPS — the roleplaying strategy game. It's taken some five years for Blizzard to announce the sequel to *WarCraft II*, and once the parties were over, the tickertape parades subsided, and the normal fevered fan-boy Blizzard-watching resumed, we were left with few details of what was really in store. And so, in service to you, dear reader, **PCXL** descended on Blizzard's Irvine, CA, office, notepad in one hand, camera in the other, to get the latest and greatest on a game that's more than just a sequel to one of the biggest PC hits ever. With *WarCraft III*, Blizzard is embarking on something new, not just for them, but for PC gaming, and guess what? They have all the right ideas to make another phenomenal impact on every gamer's free time ...

WarCraft III

So what do we have here?

A roleplaying strategy game? And that would be what, exactly? Fundamentally, *WarCraft III* is a strategy game far enough removed from its predecessor so as not to be recognizable graphically, but sufficiently close in spirit to be part of the same story. This RPS style incorporates the strategy elements of traditional realtime strategy games (click and drag selecting of units, different unit speeds and abilities, etc.) but scaled back to focus the battles at an up close and personal individual level. This developing story (set some time after the events that would have been unveiled in the now-dead *WarCraft Adventures*) has heroes at its core. Individual units that you develop along typical role-playing lines form the basis of your small-scale army.

Blizzard has revealed that six different races will be pitched in an epic battle for the future of Azeroth. The Orcs, Humans, and Demons were revealed in the fantastic teaser movie that accompanied the game's announcement. Now, **PCXL** can exclusively reveal that the fourth race is the Undead (more details later, along with speculation as to the identity of the remaining two races). You will be able to play as any of those six races, following different paths and story dynamics to their own focused goals.

It's important to explain up front that Blizzard is still reluctant to reveal many of the real nitty-gritty details at this stage (still some nine months from planned release in December). It's not so much that they *won't* reveal detailed background history, it's more that they *can't,* because these aspects will only be finalized in later playtesting. Details like character skills (dexterity, charisma, etc.) can't even be revealed since the developers honestly just don't know at this point.

With impressive creatures like this dragon, *WarCraft III* makes us all wet and stuff.

Blizzard's cinematic department employs 14 people creating in-game sequences

Spellcasting will be at the core of all the battles in *WarCraft III*.

www.DailyRadar.com

Outside the Humans' keep, the adventurers congregate before moving out under the hero's direction.

All those spells have amazing effects, even before the engine is finished.

What we DO know

The story progression is based on heroes. You begin the game with a hero who exercises influence over other units. The heroes' leadership statistic limits the total number of units with which he can group — throughout the course of the game, it's likely that no more than 10 to 12 units will be attached to a hero. As the project's producer (and *StarCraft* creator) Rob Pardo explained: "The first element [of the game] is heroes — units need to be attached to a hero in order to be moved." When you find units during the course of the game, you can't move them on their own — they must be attached to a hero. With up to four heroes under your control, that makes a maximum "army" of about 40 units trampling over the rolling countryside.

One important element of standard RTS games is resource management. While *WarCraft III* resources exist, they play a less vital role. "We want to add more RPG and tactical battle elements," Pardo revealed, "In *StarCraft* you spent about 70% of the time in resource management, and the rest playing. We want to swap that model with fewer resources, smaller towns, and longer battles." Each race will have its own resource (and a couple of the races will possibly have more than one). For the Orcs and Humans, the old standby of shiny gold bullion is needed to allow more units to be purchased and the "bases" to be upgraded. Random wandering monsters will kick up gold when slaughtered (out of their pockets ... yeah, their pockets), and later in the game, when the limited tech tree building phase is essentially over, you'll be able to liberate gold mines that provide a steady supply of cash without the need for micro-managing.

What's more unique about *WarCraft III*'s gameplay is how the game progresses. With the first hero you'll get a couple of units fairly quickly to begin your adventure. The starting town for the Human quest will comprise just three buildings — a keep, an armory and an ivory tower. The Keep allows you to create units, the armory provides a place to buy magic items and weapons, while the ivory tower houses priests. A technology tree maintains the RTS feel as the buildings can be upgraded to supply more powerful units or items.

For the Humans, the keep has three upgrade options, the armory has two (letting you create dwarven units such as the musket bearers) and the ivory tower has one upgrade (the inner sanctum) that gives you the power to create sorceress units. Ensuring a nightmare situation of game balancing in the latter stages of development, each race will have different building options. Some will have just one building and others will have different upgrade levels. (Like many other elelments, these details are still to be determined.)

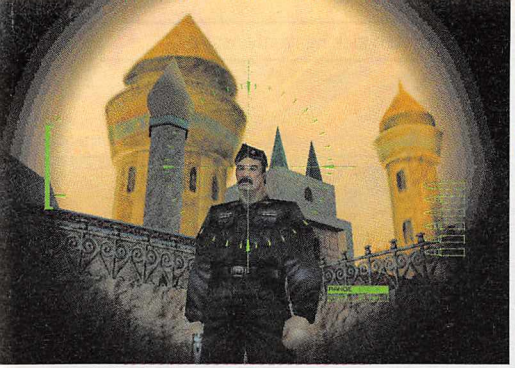
Optional quests along what is actually a fairly linear story progression will ensure that the single-player game is different each time it's played. That's on top of the variations inherent in playing any of the six races — there's going to be a huge amount of content in both unit styles and items to keep you interested in whichever race you choose.

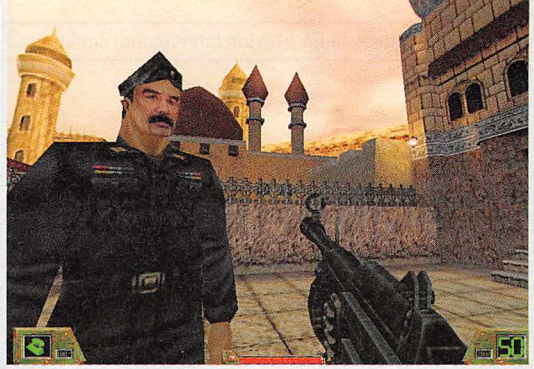
Getting 3D

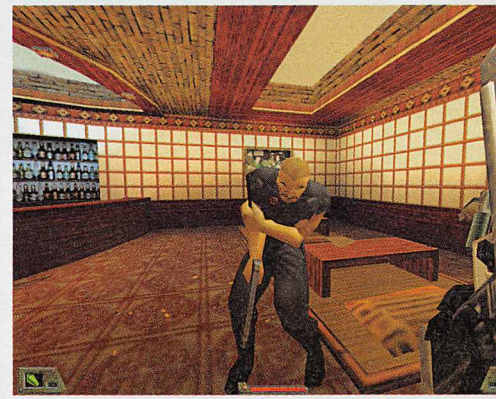
Blizzard has created its own proprietary 3D engine that utilizes a fixed camera position that shifts as your fairly tight group of characters moves over the environment. While the engine will take advantage of various 3D accelerators (exact support details TBA, would you believe?) it will also have a software mode that ensures it's playable on lower-end systems (around a PII 266 by the time of release). Right now, the engine is already looking great with some detailed textures covering the vast landscape. The story progression will see your small band traveling through maps of varying sizes (some of which are quite large).

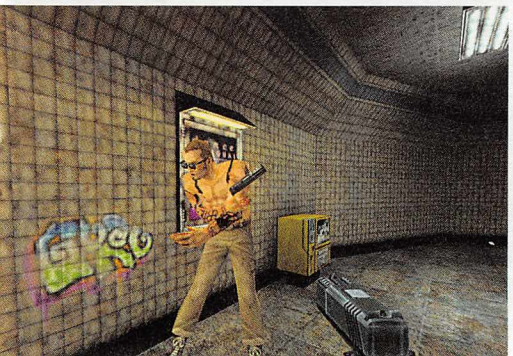
Within these maps, the terrain will deform through spell effects (such as the earthquake spell) and explosions will also scar it. The impressive early look was promising, given that it didn't include the particle system that will add a real visceral edge to combat. Blood sprays from severed limbs and eerie fogging effects are planned, as well as weather changes, adding ambient atmospheric touches to the setting.

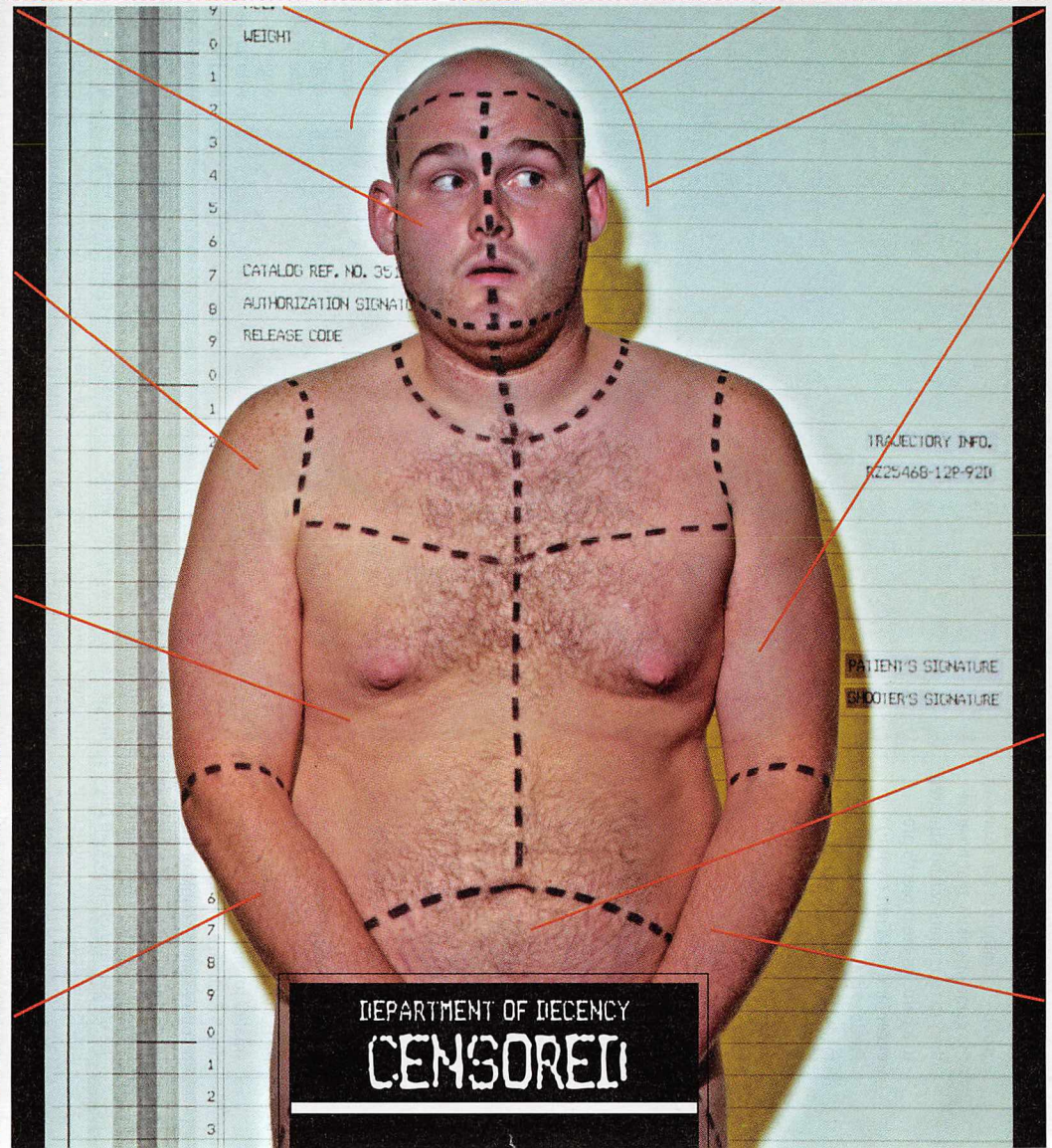
It's possible there will be certain items or spells that only work in particular terrain types. However, the terrain won't affect how the units move since, according to the lead coder, Mike O'Brien. It presents epic problems for the AI pathfinding algorithms. p. 22







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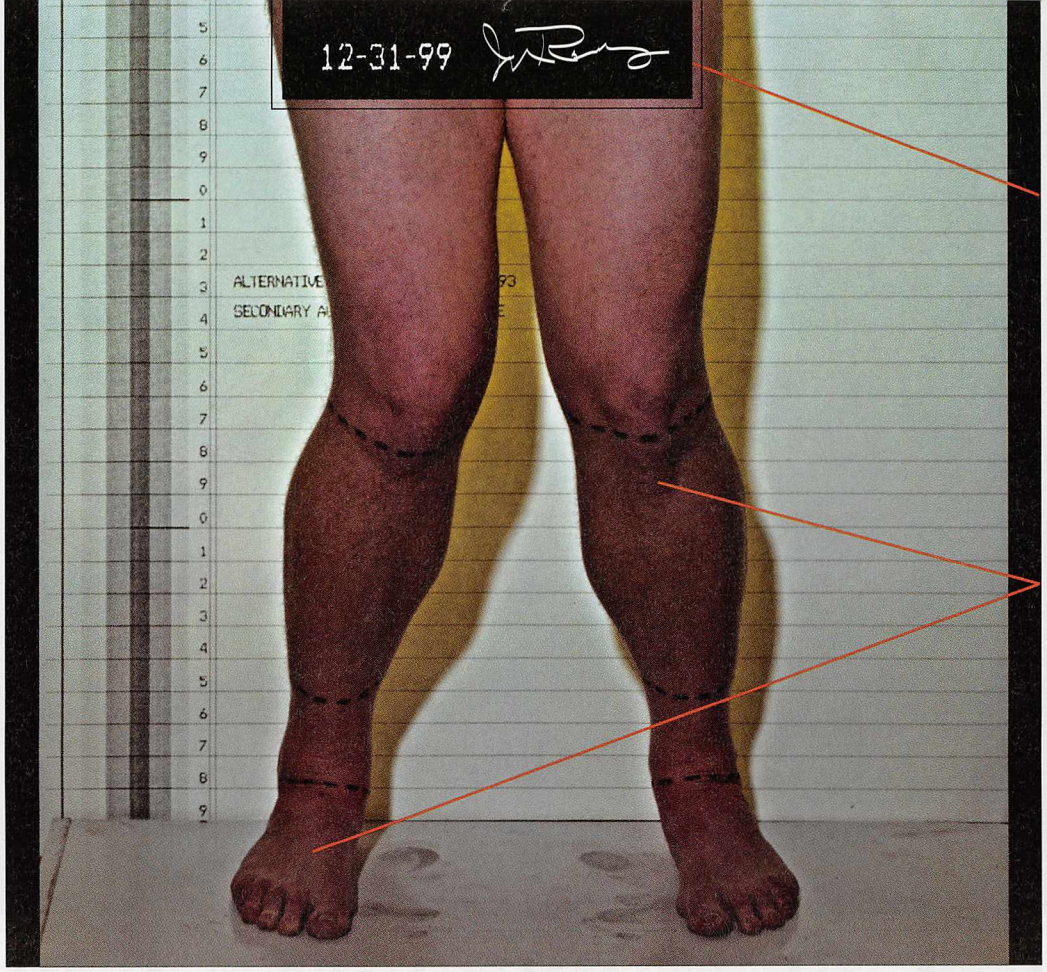

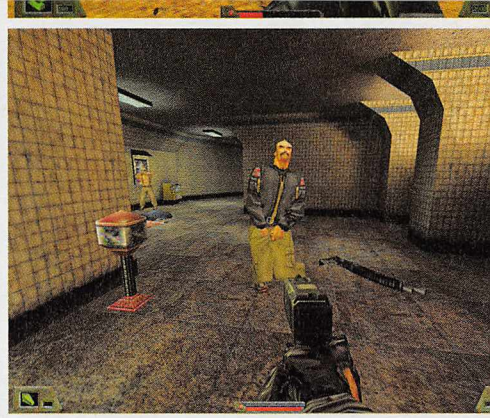

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WarCraft III

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World exclusive: The Undead

It kinda sucks when dead people get out of the ground and shamble aimlessly on some evil purpose. While it paints a picture similar to many Monday mornings at the **PCXL** offices, the *WarCraft III* Undead have an unholy agenda and a seemingly never-ending supply of dead bodies reanimating to fight the cause. There are six different Undead heroes (see bottom of page) and 6-10 different unit types. Rob Pardo revealed an intriguing design decision that aims to help the unit balance issues over the course of the development cycle. If eight units are planned for a race, six will be designed at the beginning. Then, during playtesting between the different races, certain weaknesses or unbalancing strengths will be uncovered. The remaining units will then be designed to incorporate abilities that address these holes in the logic — just another example of Blizzard doing things right.

The Undead's primary ability is animating the dead. A Necromancer hero can wear down attacking units simply by raising the creatures you've just killed. This inspires varied tactical thinking, as you must assess how to get at the Necromancer while being constantly harassed by raised units.

These Undead bastards collect corpses as resources, with a Black Hand effect likely coming out of the ground and pulling the corpse away so that it appears as a unit at the home base keep. In the single-player game, optional side quests are likely to be appealing to the Undead, since the more creatures you kill, the more units you'll be able to acquire for your forces. That's also the case in multiplayer, where wandering creatures provide plenty of fodder for boosting unit numbers.

Since wandering monsters kick up gold to be collected by Human or Orc players, this can create interesting team-based dynamics. It's likely that if the Undead player kills wandering monsters, they won't supply any gold (since it would be ridiculous to have piles of cash lying around the map). However, an Orc/Undead team could have the Orcs out killing wandering monsters for the gold, and providing the Undead with a continuous supply of corpses. Likewise, on the battlefield, without the traditional RTS focus on attacking bases, any large-scale wandering encounter could change the shape of a conflict. A pile of dead bodies from a bloody encounter suddenly becomes an appealing resource pool for any Undead sniffing around the area. A skilled opponent may draw wandering monsters to one area, kill them, and create a resource pool for the Undead. Now he can set a trap to lure these Undead units, in effect dynamically altering the control points and shape of the game map. Between the six races, the possibilities for such dynamics are almost endless.

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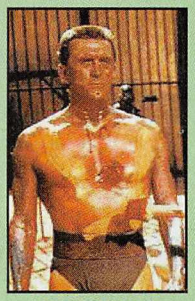
UNDEAD HEROES

DREAD LORD
Vampire-like creature

ABOMINATION
Whip-wielding zombie

NECROMANCER
Spellcaster



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Chariot-riding warrior

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Inch for inch, this is the largest screenshot ever published in a game mag (probably)

Hello. I'm a random floating box pointing to brown stuff. I believe that's the ground.

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"CHARRRGGGEE!" A knight racing into combat like this will do triple damage.

Hold this page at arm's length and marvel at the detail — cuz it's really cool.

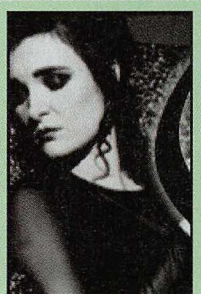
UNDEAD UNIT TYPES

CRYPT FIEND
Spider-like spell-caster

LICH
Spell-caster

GHOUL
Four different types

COLD WRAITH
One touch freezes victims



BANSHEE
A flying terror

DEATH KNIGHT
Melee-based foe

Missing from the Undead unit types is the Shade that replicates enemy units

WarCraft III

Heroes and Units

Over the course of the single-player game, the current estimate is that you will be in control of no more than four heroes at a time with their attendant 10 to 12 units. These groups can be spread over different parts of the map, and while the interface design is still being tweaked, it will incorporate animated pictures of the heroes that you can click on to snap the map straight to their location. There will also be some form of mini-map to let you know where enemies are. This map, along with sound cues, will keep you informed of groups that stumble on monsters and quest locations.

One important aspect of the game mechanics that has yet to be confirmed is how the heroes will travel back to the home keep to restock on units should you get an ass-whupping out in the wilderness. There may be some sort of teleport device to ensure that there won't be any long stretches of tedious travel as you back track from the linear progression of the directed story.

Developing individual heroes is a primary focus, as there will be various methods of leveling up and fighting the numerous battles (through spellcasters or larger groups of melee-focused units). There's a real potential that the best form of attack is to throw all your units against the enemy hero (who stands out on the battlefield by wielding a glowing weapon). Killing him as fast as possible and mopping up the remaining units will be easy. Blizzard is acutely aware of this and will be testing heavily in play balancing — it's probable that heroes who die will reappear back at their home keep sans any powerful items. In an effort to avoid this situation entirely, the AI units will protect their boss at the expense of their own well being. The character AI will be adjusted during play testing by assessing how the best players at the Blizzard office approach the various challenges, and trying to get the AI to replicate those actions.

Part of the balancing could also be included in how each hero's group is constructed. Units have different movement speeds (the minotaur being slower than wolf riders, obviously) and a group will only move as fast as its slowest member. Specializations will be inevitable, such as grouping fast-moving units together, with slower units in their own groups. This adds a strategic element when deciding how to move the groups in order to make effective attacks on enemy encampments.

It won't be possible to pause the game during combat in order to plan strategies.

Whether or not spellcasters require a set line-of-sight to their targets is still TBA.

MORE HEROES ...

Each hero type has its own specialized abilities, as does each unit. The make-up of your groups will need careful balancing of those abilities, alongside factors such as unit speed and the leadership rating of your hero. Here are some of the other heroes and units:

Humans

PALADIN ···› A melee-focused hero
ARCHMAGE ···› Hero spellcaster
CRUSADER ···› The more powerful hero version of the Knight
KNIGHTS ···› Possesses a charge attack that gives a burst of speed and inflicts triple damage
DWARVEN MORTAR TEAM ···› Artillery unit
DWARVEN RIFLEMEN ···› Range attacks
PRIEST ···› The basic healer, but can also perform a damaging exorcism attack on Undead
SORCERESS ···› The upgraded priests can cast slow spells, invisibility and can summon water elementals
DWARVEN FOOTMAN ···› A melee unit with a special defend ability that essentially turtles in a location

Orcs

MINOTAUR ···› A brutish melee unit (with a fantastic death animation) using a bull rush that brutally gores and stuns opponents
GRUNT ···› Your basic melee fodder with a berserker mode that deals more damage, but inflicts some damage on the berserk unit
TROLL HUNTER ···› A tracking unit that can see heat signatures on the ground
WOLF RIDER ···› Can throw nets over fleeing enemies, and can be used very effectively with the Hunter units doing the tracking
ORC SHAMAN ···› Ensures that the Orcs have some spellcasting ability
WYVERN RIDER ···› An aerial unit that can travel swiftly but must land in order to attack

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Hope we didn't spoil any "exclusives" by guessing that the elves and angels are the two missing races

All the Human's horses and men couldn't put Humpty together again.

Race speculation

It's *Warcraft III*, so we know it's got Orcs and Humans front and center through the whole story (and, in fact, Blizzard confirmed that there would be a couple of characters central to the plot, in a similar vein to the use of Cloud in the *Final Fantasy* series). The cinematic teaser also introduced the Demons as one of the six races, though little has actually been revealed (or decided) about their talents. **PCXL** exclusively unveils in this story the fourth race — the Undead. That leaves two more. What could they be? Well, we tried sneaking around the offices, but our attempts were thwarted and we have resorted to speculation — or some would say that we are making wild guesses. Witness the evolutionary process of a gaming hypothesis ...

What primary characters are there in *Warcraft I* and *II* and not here?

Dwarves? No, they are units in the Human side.

Elves? A strong contender — they're a dominant force in *Warcraft II* and not visible in anything we've seen in *Warcraft III*. Almost a certainty. In fact, write it down. The fifth race is Elves, we stake our barely-credible reputation on it.

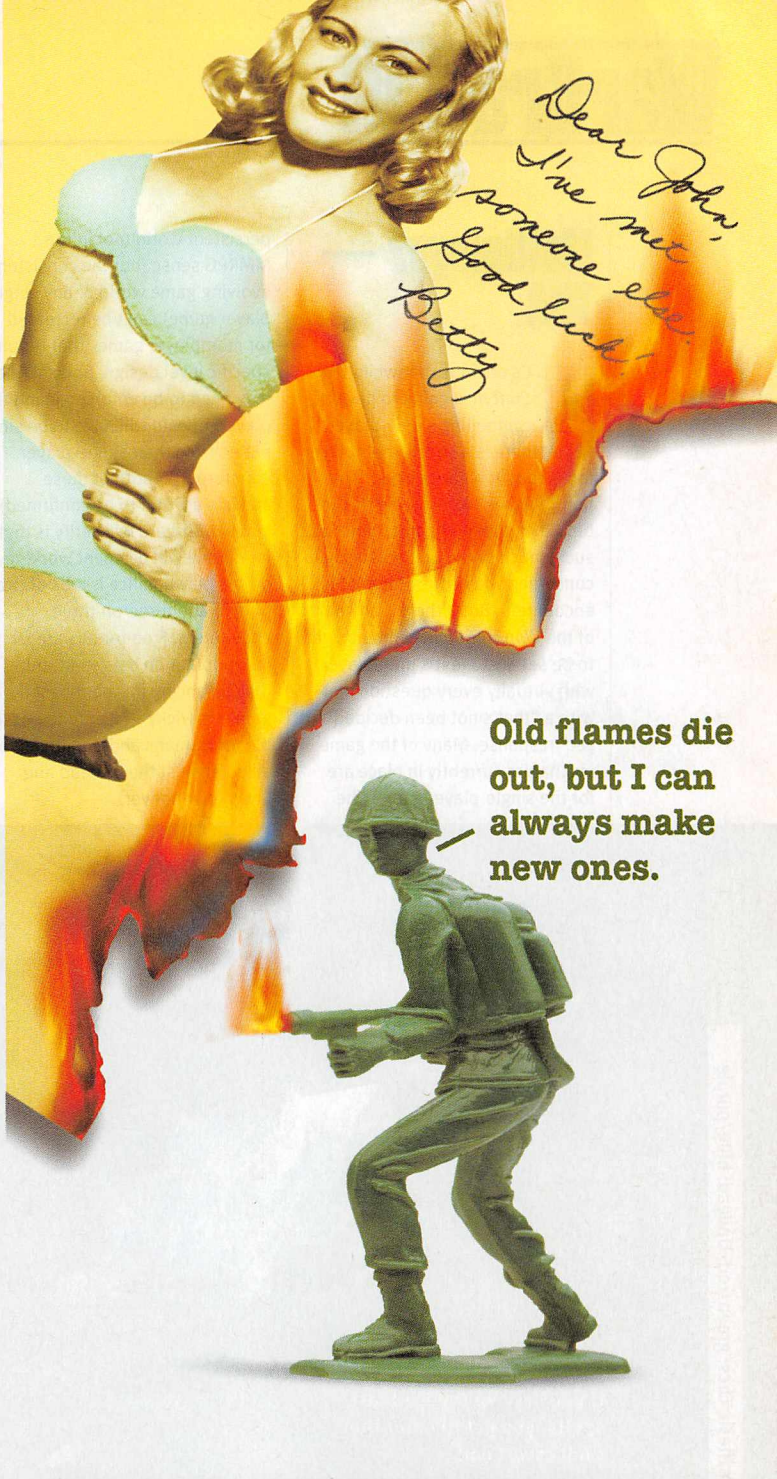
So the thinking continues ... we've got Humans and Elves on the "good" side. We've established the Orcs, Undead and Demons on the "evil" side. The logic progresses that the final race should be on the "good" side. The Humans and Elves are "traditional" as are Orcs and Undead. Demons are a wild card, and that could be balanced on the "good" side. So, more options?

Ogres? Not visible anywhere, but that would unbalance the three-per-side logic (it's possible that ogre units could be allied within the Demon horde).

Halflings or Gnomes? Nah, little people suck. It would be like having Ewoks in *Warcraft* and that's a thought that cannot be processed.

Faeries/Angels? As the wild card flipside to the Demon, an angelic or faery race could provide the perfect foil. Traditionally they have spellcasting abilities and it would certainly be a good race to hold back for a final marketing push announcement before release Expect the fifth race — we're telling you it is the Elves — to be announced at E3.

So there you have our thinking. The two remaining races are the Elves and the Angels/Faeries. You heard it here first — let the discussions commence.



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Multiplayer — TBA

It's obvious that while *WarCraft III* is going to have a compelling single-player game, there is a strong multiplayer focus too. Rob Pardo says, "The first thing we're designing this to be is a multiplayer game," and, as such, much of the unit balancing is concerned with issues for online encounters. But if there's any part of the *WarCraft III* design that's yet to be set in stone it's multiplayer, with virtually every question met with a "that's not been decided yet" response. Many of the game mechanics currently in place are for the single-player game: The persistent world (not in the MMRPG sense, but the consistent, evolving game world of any single-player game) can't be recreated for multiplayer games that require specific level design. Special rules may need to be enforced in multiplayer; quests will have to be simplified from their single-player counterparts (both of these aspects are still to be confirmed).

What Blizzard will verify is that a lot of time will be spent working on the play balance issues of two-on-two and three-on-three encounters. Free-for-alls are far less popular on battle.net, but play balancing for team-based games is tricky — it's quite possible for Humans and Demons to be allied against the Undead and Elves (or whoever).

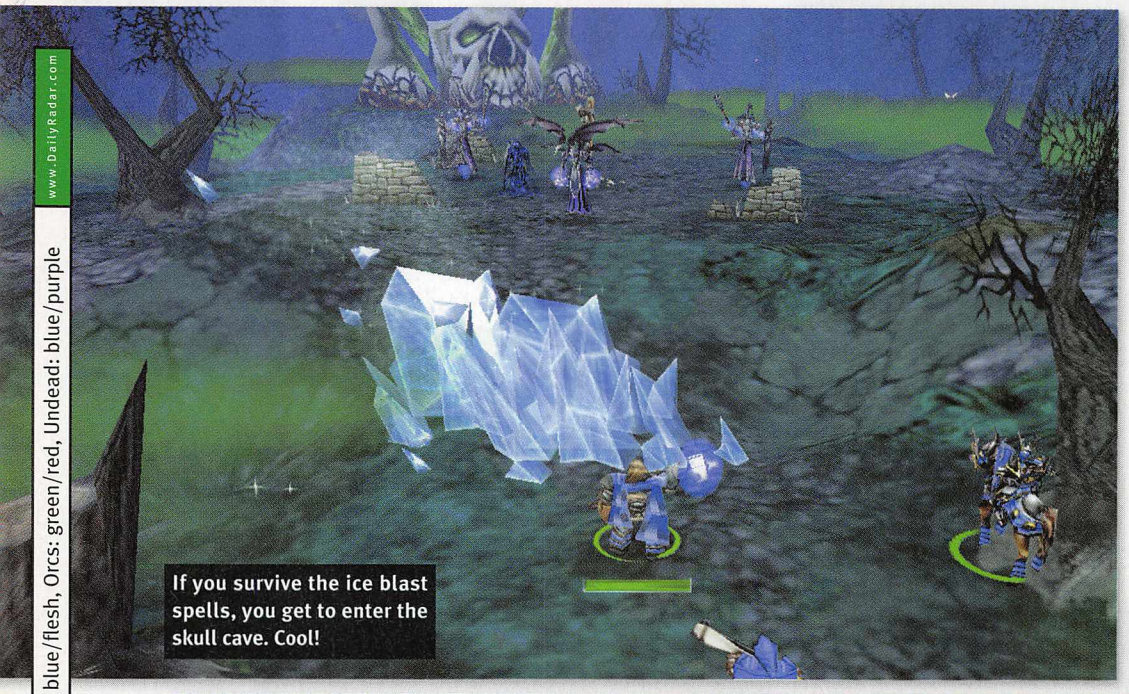
Details such as the likely win conditions for multiplayer encounters have all to be confirmed. Since there will be a base of sorts for each race, it's likely that destroying the keep (or primary building) will end the game. The encounters themselves will be extremely varied, given the potential to go on quests (to buff your hero) before facing off against the enemy.

Even such simple basics as the number of players that multiplayer games will support, and the number and style of maps to be available at release is still up in the air. You can be sure that we'll bring you the updates on this stuff as soon as the powers-that-be within Blizzard have the game in sufficient working order to start some serious playtesting.

Make it what you will

No doubt a few short hours after *WarCraft III* hits store shelves, rabid fans will be releasing new units and tweaking every element of the game. That's because Blizzard is designing the engine and formatting the scripts to allow users to go beyond standard skin creation or unit additions, allowing them to get to the core of the AI routines and even create Total Conversions. The main features of the game will be released in non-proprietary file formats, so all the art will be in a standard form (such as .pcx or .gif) and scripts will be text documents. The actual construction of the scripts will be very simple to follow, with fairly longhand descriptions of events that read like English (as opposed to "Programish"). You'll be able to view triggered events and see the code that makes those actions occur to help even non-programmers get their hands dirty in the guts of the game's operating system.

AI routines will be written in standard source code for the hacker-heads who want to get involved in the real nitty-gritty of unit actions. This is where much of the work in TCs will go and the possibilities for different game types with units from other games is virtually endless. (A *StarCraft* TC will be one of the first out of the gate, don't ya think?) ▶ p. 28



If you survive the ice blast spells, you get to enter the skull cave. Cool!

Warcraft III will have indoor levels as well as the outdoor ones shown here.

All the races will have color motifs ⟶ Humans: blue/flesh, Orcs: green/red, Undead: blue/purple

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All the models in the game have detailed textures and varied model sizes.

"SECRET PROJECT" SPECULATION

Currently in development at Blizzard's Irvine establishment is a "secret project." All that was confirmed by the Blizzard staffers was that the project is NOT *StarCraft 2*. Despite the obvious sales potential, it should come as no surprise that the teams would want to try something a little different — there's only so much Terran, Protoss, and Zerg a designer can take. While support continues, we reckon that the "secret project" is something completely new.

Some possibilities:

DIABLO III ···› No way. Version two is taking too long and everyone wants it out of the door

WARCRAFT 4 ···› Way too early to even think about it

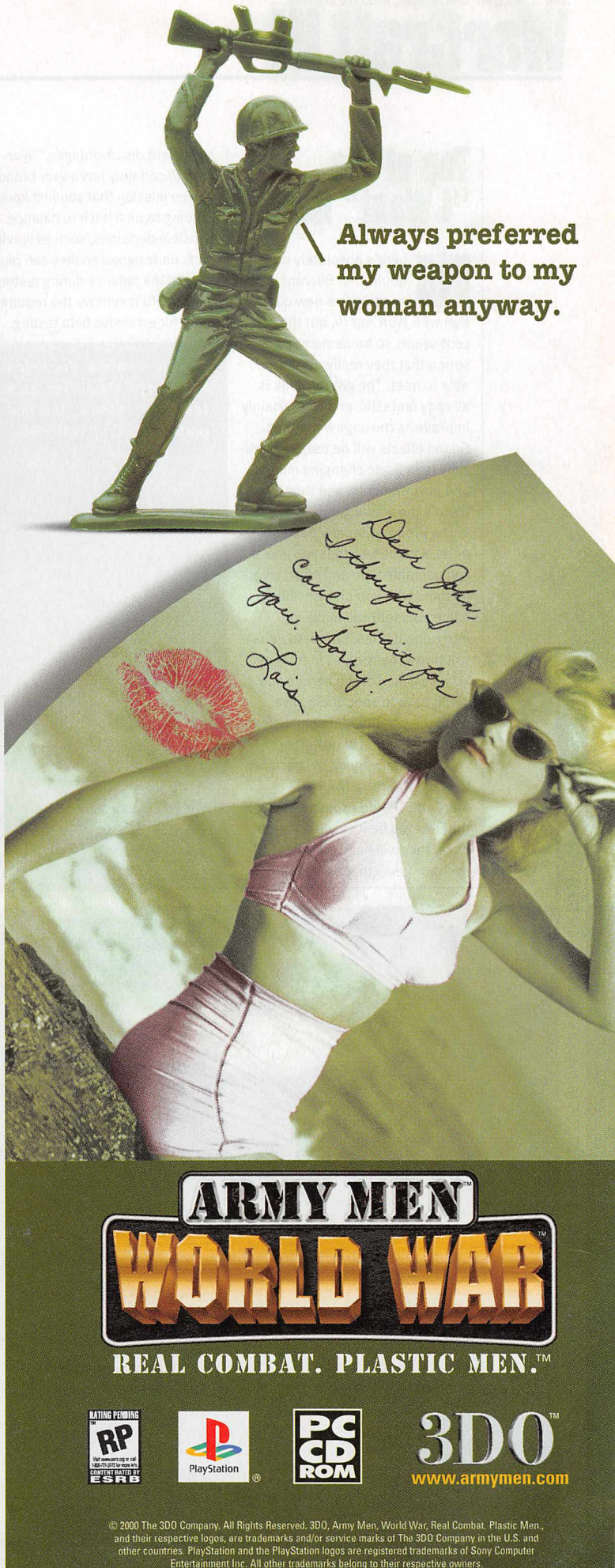
STARCRAFT 2 ···› Confirmed as not being in development

SOMETHING ORIGINAL ···› Blizzard goes out on a limb in some other game style or format. Let's say that it's science fiction, since both current projects are fantasy. Blizzard has yet to do any modern setting game that's probably because they don't want to

OUR BEST GUESS ···›

A massively multiplayer game — How about a sci-fi game based around the *StarCraft* universe? It's a setting ripe for further exploration and wouldn't be a direct sequel. Importantly, Blizzard is investing a great deal of time into making sure that battle.net is ready for the thousands of players that are going to hit it when *Diablo II* hits shelves. The client-server code for this game could form the basis of the technology that will help power a MMRPG similar to those that are all doing so well for Verant, Origin, and Microsoft. The obvious name missing from that list is Blizzard.

So there you go — a **PCXL** complete speculation exclusive — Blizzard is currently working on a massively multiplayer online roleplaying strategy game called *Starquest: When Rats Die In Space Nobody Can Hear Them Squeal* (or something to that effect)



Top of the "I Want" list

There's absolutely no doubt that Blizzard is heading in a new direction with *WarCraft III*, but the concept seems so fundamentally sound that they really don't seem able to miss. The graphic look is already fantastic, and will certainly improve as the engine matures. Sound effects will be used dynamically to indicate changing moods and environments, and then there's the actual game.

The progression of a band of units, with heroes that you invest considerable time and effort creating (and who you may be able to name yourself) will make for intriguing battles. Standard units will throw themselves in front of attacks aimed at the heroes and you'll have to keep them alive (with the penalty for failing being a severe reduction in power).

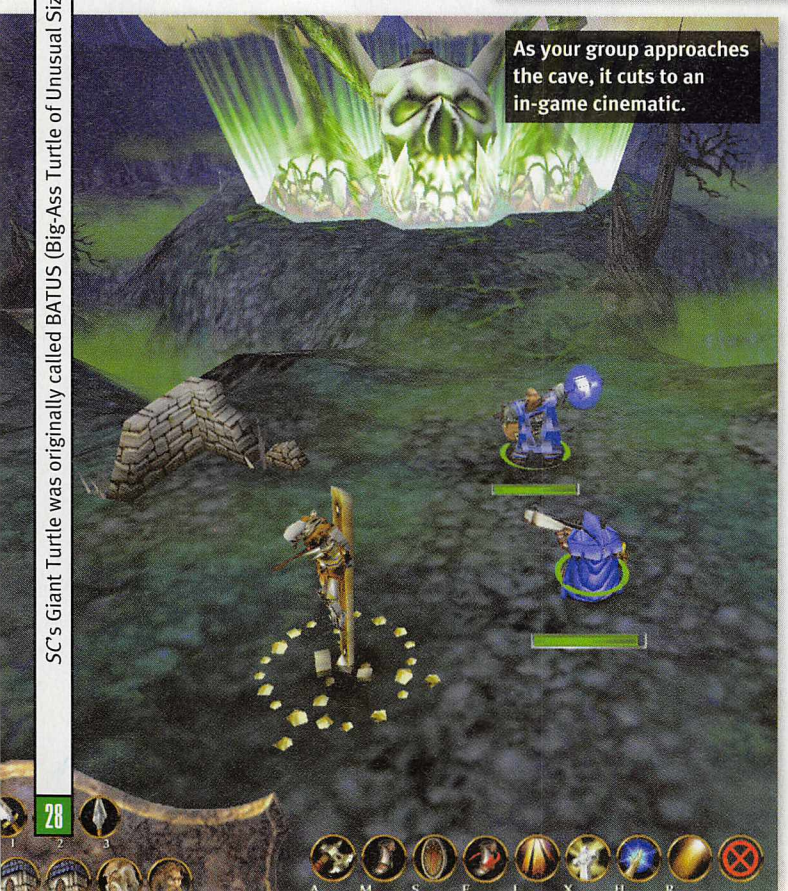
"We're really trying to specialize the races far more than in *StarCraft*," Pardo explained, "While the Orcs will be focused on brute force, they will have access to spells or items that address any significant disadvantages." *WarCraft III* certainly has a very broad design mission that you just know is going to be a bitch to balance. Sensible decisions, such as leaving units undesigned so they can plug gaps in the balance during testing, will hopefully remove the requirement for extensive beta testing.

And guess what? Blizzard even reckons that they are on course to hit the end of the year. Of course no one believes them, and realistically, you shouldn't be expecting to see it until around March 2001*, but it will still be *the* game that everyone wants to play when it's finally released.

YADDA YADDA YADDA

* We really, *really* hope *WarCraft III* will hit the end of the year, and figure that by suggesting that they will never do it, we will instill even greater resolve in the design team to make sure it's released on schedule. Good thinking, huh?

Certain control decisions have been simplified as a result of lessons learned porting *StarCraft* to the N64.



As your group approaches the cave, it cuts to an in-game cinematic.

KOREAN STARCRAFT MANIA

You may have heard that *StarCraft* has done particularly strong business in a whole new market — Korea. But did you have any idea just how important *StarCraft* has been? Check this: A solid title would expect to sell in the region of 15-30,000 units in Korea (*Age of Empires* apparently reached around 150,000). Between *StarCraft* and the *Brood War* expansion, around 1.5 million units have been sold in a territory of 12 million people. That's like selling 25 million units in the U.S.

This has had a direct impact on the Korean economy. U.S. government crackdowns on international piracy of intellectual property rights has resulted in more legitimate copies of games being purchased. In Korea, the success of *StarCraft* heralded the creation of Game Centers, where 40 or more machines were linked for mass gaming. With the huge success of these centers, owners were forced to buy a copy of the game per terminal or risk being shut down. In addition, one Game Center manager told Blizzard that she had been able to employ over 50 people as a direct result of *StarCraft*.

This success has gone even further, with the Korean government supplying grants and funding to allow home-grown game companies to set up shop, figuring rightly that Korean talent would help develop the home economy. Back home, much of Blizzard's marketing department now spends its time creating trinkets ranging from *StarCraft* key rings to potato chips for this newfound market.

A recent *StarCraft* tournament saw some of Korea's top pop acts performing while matches were displayed on three huge screens, hundreds of gamers clamoring to see the finalists earn over $100K in prizes. There were over 40,000 entrants to the contest, and now there are even Korean gamers living the life of "professional *StarCraft* players."

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Homicide: DEATH IN GAMES

It's all fun and games... until you're blown to shit

So you want to sit down with Dr. Death and hear some stories, eh? You've come to the right place, because I've seen every flavor of gaming violence this industry has to offer. I've been on the *Quake* morgue-planet, given disaster-relief after countless alien invasions, and frequently served as a professional witness for law enforcement organizations. I can't honestly say many people pay much attention to me or my work, but then the consequences of extremely violent conflicts are pretty gut-churning for the layman. Hell, with all the respawning and restarting going on, I doubt any of you player-types think a guy like me even exists. That's ok with me. I'm just a man taking it one day and one body at a time, and I'm not too eager to get my ticket punched by some trigger-happy yokel looking for a weekend frag. But because *PC Accelerator* has taken an interest in my trade, I gave 'em an inside look at the most unheralded of digital jobs — gaming forensics.

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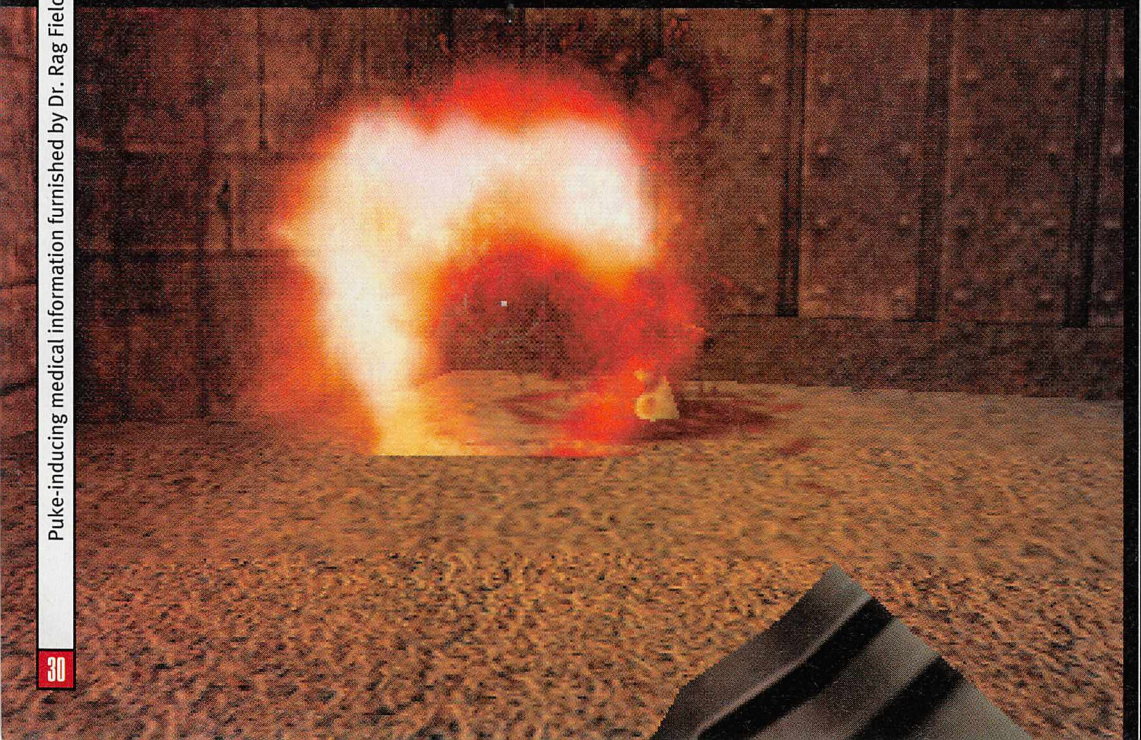
Puke-inducing medical information furnished by Dr. Rag Fields, 15-year ER veteran

Case 01: Corpus Detonatus Absolutum "gibbed" Location: Quake III Arena

It required little investigation to determine what had transpired at this scene of horrifying mayhem. The casualty had received a mortal wound wherein most of the body was all but atomized. Pieces of flesh from this violent disintegration were scattered as far as 50 feet from the point of detonation – at least I think that was flesh.



CONSEQUENCES: In the split second before the rocket explodes, chest trauma from initial impact would be severe enough to cause death. The subsequent detonation that dispatched the victim would merely scatter parts of the corpse over a wide area. Consider — if you were to shoot someone in the chest with a bullet the size of a coffee thermos, you could feel safe in turning your back, lying down, and taking a nice long nap, without fear of reprisal. When the projectile is also an explosive device, the only additional concern with taking said nap would be injury from falling body parts.

TREATMENT: A crack team would have to be assembled. Sherlock Holmes to find all the pieces, Dr. Frankenstein to assemble them into a semi-human form, all the Leprechauns in Ireland for lots of good luck, and finally, Versace, 'cause clothes maketh the man.

"Wow, I can see my colon from here."

CASE 02:
homo separatus de automobilius
"Vehicular Homicide in Mid-flight"
Location: Carmageddon

This was a real bash and splash case. The front of the car severed the guy's torso from the lower body at the level of the second lumbar vertebra. Facial impact to windshield caused massive crushing injuries to the bone around his eyeballs and nose, as well as tearing away the left eyeball and optic nerve. The torso was flung approximately 70 feet, at which point it suffered pulverizing fractures to the left side of his skull. Scattered bone fragments were imbedded as deep as the corpus collosum (the center of his brain). At the point where the torso came to rest, there was a 6' x 9' blood pool and a linear trail of blood extending to the point of impact. Estimated external blood loss: 3 1/2 quarts. As for the lower body, the front bumper tore away 60% of the frontal tissue on both thighs to the depth of the femur. As the victim slipped under the car, the backside was deeply abraded with diffuse bruises. The right kneecap was severed, along with some of his shin. The crushing injuries suffered under the vehicle caused the extruded lower bowel to be ruptured, disgorging copious fecal contents.

CONSEQUENCES: The victim would suffer near instantaneous death due to the severed major abdominal arteries, which could not deliver an adequate supply of blood to necessary cells and the brutal concussive damage to the brain. In all, 86 plastic bags of various sizes would be required to transport remains to the morgue.

TREATMENT: If the scene had been prepared beforehand with a state-of-the-art operating room manned by world-class surgeons, scrubbed and ready, who worked together like a finely oiled machine and moved with the precision and lightning rapidity of a jaguar, the victim's odds of surviving would still be exactly zero.

"All I need now is an eye patch and a parrot."

CASE 03:
Kneecapius Oopsie Ouchium
"Chopped-off leg"
Location: Die by the Sword

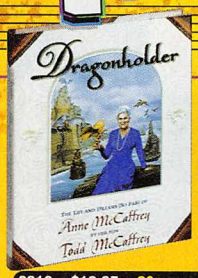
The troll, using a 60-pound sickle, caused a low-thigh amputation, which severed the femoral and other arteries and their associated nerves, along with his kneecap ligaments along with anything else in the area.

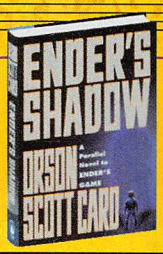
CONSEQUENCES: Severe hemorrhaging would trigger a sympathetic nervous reaction (i.e. accelerated heart rate, elevated respiratory rate, pallor, perspiration, and dizziness) that would continue 10 to 15 minutes, followed by all but irreversible shock, resulting in cerebral and heart muscle death. Post-injury reflexes would cause buckling of his uninjured leg, collapse, and the grabbing of his injured leg in order to apply pressure and slow the blood loss. Without tying it off, he would lose consciousness in three to four minutes and his life within 10.

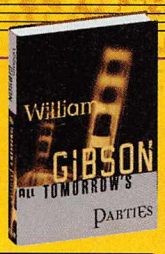
TREATMENT: Under sedation and local anesthesia, he could receive vascular cautery, wherein all the severed bleeders would get electrically burned by a special instrument resulting in closure by scar tissue formation. Lab studies of blood and urine would determine whether or not there was organ damage from blood loss and the stump would be prepared for skinflap closure. Under managed care, he would be discharged within 10 days and recovery would be complete within a month. Of course, he still wouldn't have a leg. If these treatments were unavailable, he would be smart to dip the wound an inch deep into the lava nearby. That would cauterize the wound, stop the blood loss, and kill remaining nerve endings greatly reducing the pain. Assuming he's got a strong immune system and the burn wound does not get infected, he stands a chance of survival with no further treatment.

▶ p. 34

Know the Enemy







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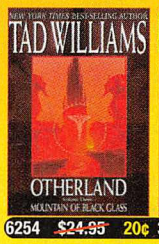

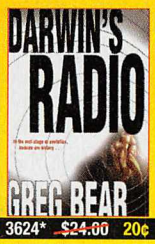

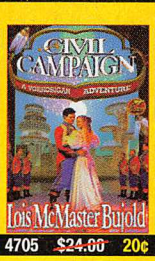

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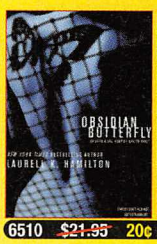

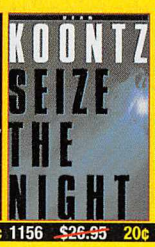

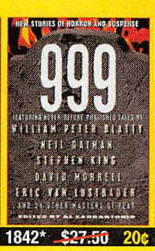

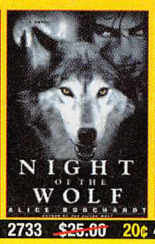

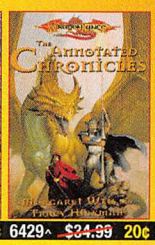

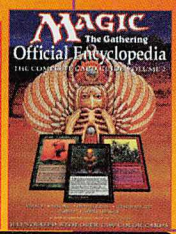

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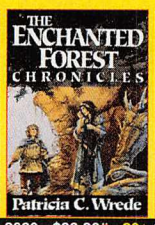

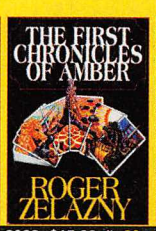

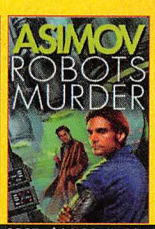

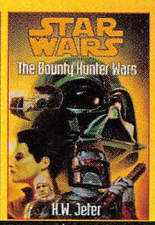

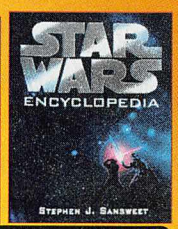

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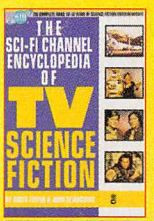

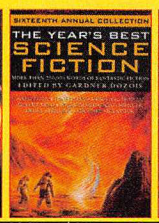

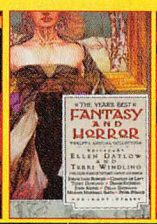

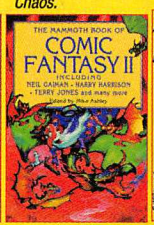

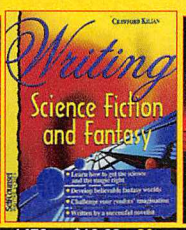

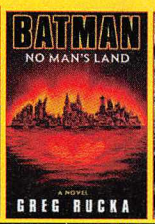

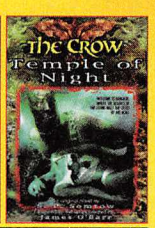

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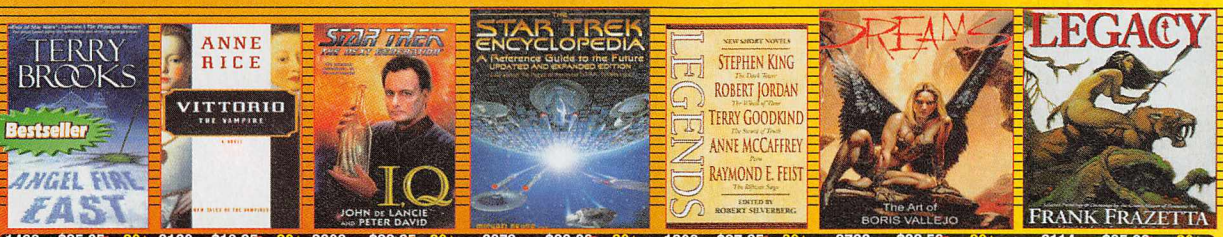

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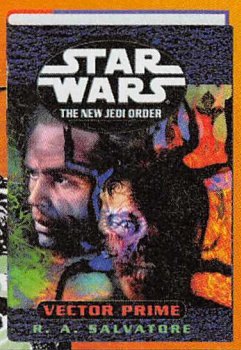

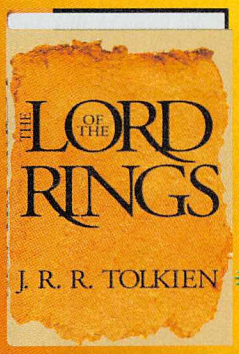

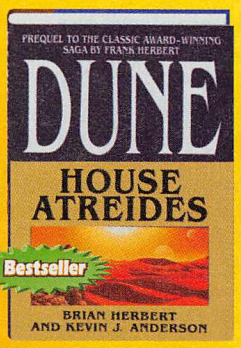

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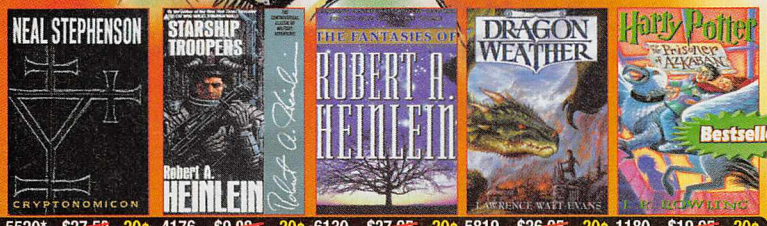

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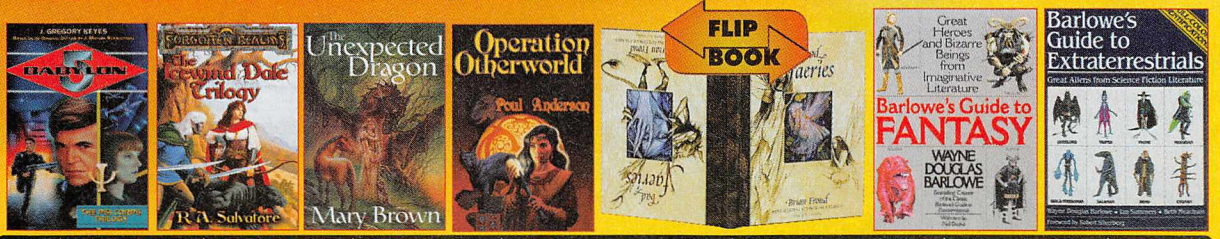

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Homicide: DEATH IN GAMES

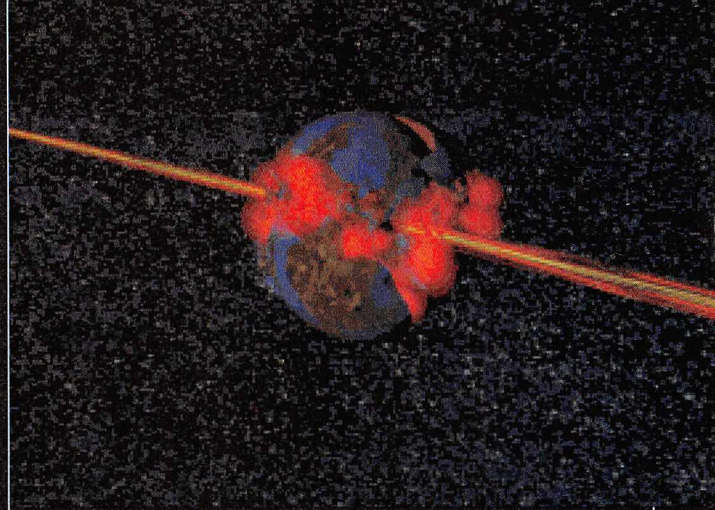
◀ p. 31

Case 04: Terra Blasticular Bye-Bye "Planet Buster" Location: Master Of Orion 2

The death-beam, being strong enough to blow up a planet, would cause the atmosphere to be superheated by the generation of geothermal heat liberated from the Earth's molten core, as well as from extreme frictional forces from tremendous chunks of Earth grinding against each other. This armageddon would involve innumerable earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, and winds of such colossal size and magnitude that they make me shit my pants just thinking about it.

CONSEQUENCES: Absolutely everybody would be a goner. Disregarding the lucky ones who are instantly annihilated by being directly in the path of the death beam, the effect of the chaos caused by the upheaval of the environment (earthquakes, flying magma, unholy hurricanes of death) would result in near-complete extinction of the human race. The rest of the exposed populace would die of atmospheric heat and pressure changes. Those who were in sufficiently sheltered surroundings (bomb shelters, highly reinforced concrete bunkers) would simply have larger coffins. Someone on the polar ice caps might avoid instant death by diving into the icy waters in order to use it as an insulating layer against the extreme atmospheric heat, but coming up for air would be lethal. Even if you were in a specially designed personal-survival chamber, you would be blasted away on a small fragment of the Earth that would have the gravitational attraction a mere fraction (literally) of the regular Earth and would quickly become an icy, cyclone-ripped nightmare wasteland. Everyone would die. Everyone!

TREATMENT: Are you kidding me? What part of "annihilation" didn't you understand?



Planet buster death rays don't kill people, angry aliens do.

Um, you have, like, this thing ... on your face ... yeah, there ...

Case 05: Retro-cerebellar Dischargus "Head Shot" Location: Sin

The shot entered the victim just above the left angle of the jaw, in occipitomandibular (from jaw to back of skull) trajectory. From the point of impact, the bullet shattered the lower jawbone and cheek bone, dislodged the left eyeball — rupturing the left optic nerve — then proceeded to wreak havoc through the lower left hemisphere of the brain before finally blowing out the left occipital skull before exiting.

CONSEQUENCES: Secondary to the displacement of brain matter and accumulation of hemorrhagic fluids, death was instantaneous due to brainstem disruption of cardiorespiratory regulation. In short, the bullet won his heart and took his breath away.

TREATMENT: Due to the severity of the injury, victim should be advised to avoid spelling bees, trivia contests, and athletic events.

Case 06: Trebuchetus Smushium Homo Noodlem "Crushed Noggin" Location: Age Of Empires II

Upon contact with the projectile, the back and top of his skull collapsed, displacing brain matter forward. As a consequence, both eyeballs were displaced from their sockets, leaving them dangling from optic nerves. Blood and brain matter were pressed through all facial orifices and both his ears. The top of his spine was compressed and finely fragmented, with a shard of the third cervical vertebra puncturing his trachea and esophagus, severing his left artery and jugular vein, and lodging in his sternocleidomastoid muscle (front neck muscle). The nape of his neck was torn through, transecting his spinal cord, leaving the remnant of his head resting against his lower sternum.

CONSEQUENCES: He would suffer total obliteration of his cardiorespiratory centers at the brain stem, and circulatory collapse. Death would occur immediately after contact with the rock.

TREATMENT: His face, having acted as a meat and juice strainer for his brains, has totally relieved this victim of any chance of repair or reconstruction. He's dead, dead, dead, and dead.

Run from trebuchet = Get your damn head caved in.

www.DailyRadar.com

Case 07: Jurassis Grassium "Eaten by dinosaur" Location: Carnivores 2

This unfortunate man was found resting in a pool of dried blood approximately 3' x 4' in diameter, extending to a depth of 1-2" into the soil. The greater part of the musculature of his thighs and chest, along with pectoral musculature and viscera, was apparently devoured. He suffered near total abdominal evisceration with laceration of the abdominal aorta, resulting in loss of 80% circulating blood volume.

CONSEQUENCES: Having no functional abdominal muscles with which to exert diaphragmatic pressure sufficient to produce a scream, he would be limited to groans and whimpers during the course of his largely ceremonial struggle. He would have witnessed his own consumption, lapsing into unconsciousness within the first minute, and yielding to death by circulatory collapse a few minutes later.

TREATMENT: The only possible way he could survive this attack would be dispatch this creature with repeated shots from a .50 caliber handgun with 400-grain wad-cutters on a trajectory directly from the eye to the brain, and to do so no later than the initial bite. By receiving only a single bite, penetrating the abdominal wall and various internal organs, it would be possible to save his life with immediate professional attention. After the second bite, he's a "meal deal."

"Eat up, you fat lizard chump, I had broken glass for lunch. Ha!"

"Shock to the heart — and you're to blame — you give death — a bad name (bad name)."

Case 08: Mortalum Piercius "Impaled on Spear" Location: Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

A 2" diameter rod was jammed with great force into the left lower chest, near the sternum, and straight up through the back between the shoulder blade and spine. In transit, it penetrated the lung sac, the critical chambers of the heart – atrium and ventricle – the subclavian artery, nerve plexus, and muscles of the upper back. Victim also sustained moderate internal hemorrhaging from heart and blood vessels into chest cavity and lungs.

CONSEQUENCES: Initially there would be total heart pump failure, followed within minutes by severe circulatory insufficiency, loss of consciousness and brain death. This would give him just enough time to say, "This sucks!" before his lights went out.

TREATMENT: Removal of tamponade (pulling the rod out) would simply result in more bleeding. Without a working heart, there would be only one person who could offer help to this victim and he would be holding a bible, not a scalpel.

▶ p. 38

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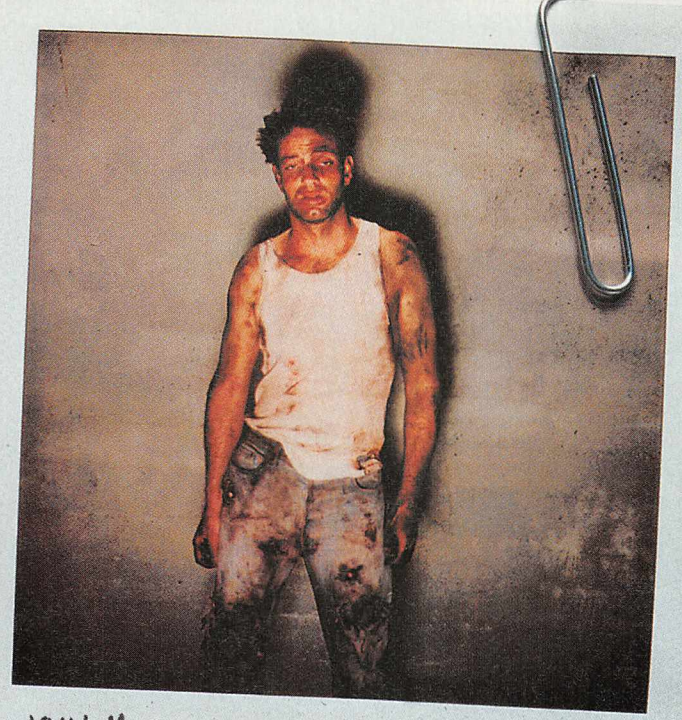
JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #18
-HEADWOUND FROM HIGH SPEED WRECK WHILE
ATTEMPTING EXTREME DRIVING DOWN VEGAS STRIP.



JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #134
- STEPPED ON PROXIMITY MINE NEAR
ROULETTE TABLE WHILE BATTLING TERRORISTS.

THEY COULDN'T HANDLE BEING JOHN McCLANE. CAN YOU?

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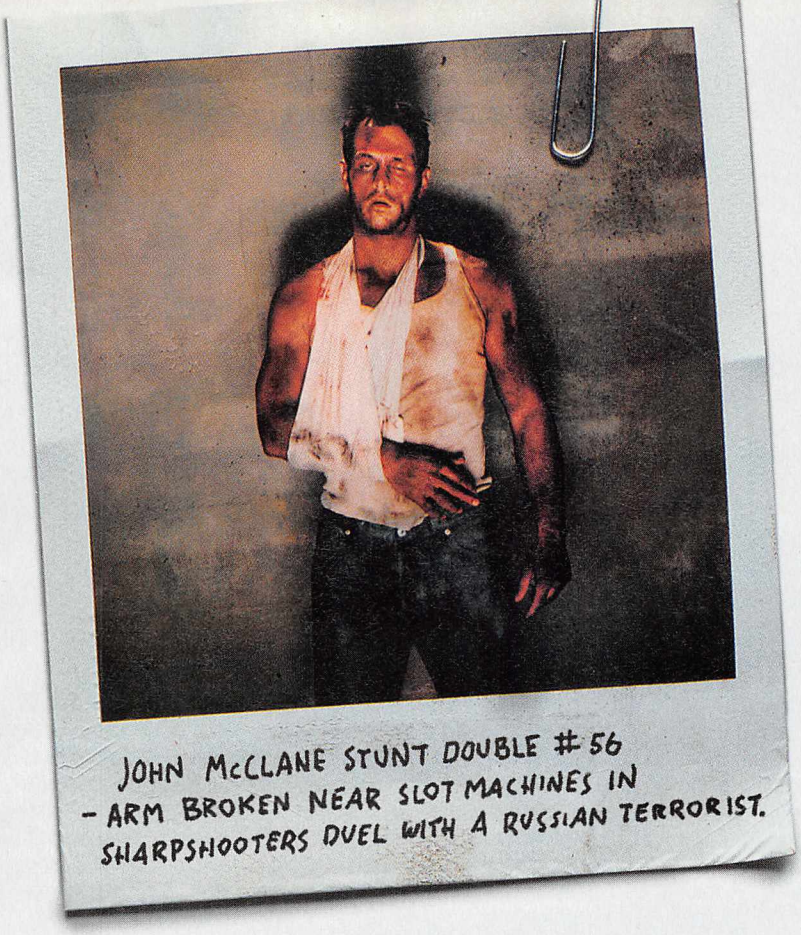
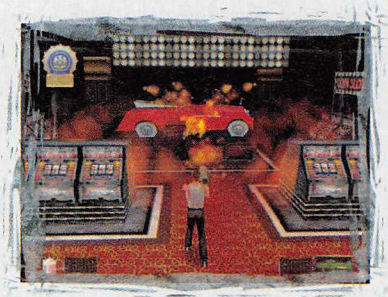


JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #56
- ARM BROKEN NEAR SLOT MACHINES IN SHARPSHOOTERS DUEL WITH A RUSSIAN TERRORIST.



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Homicide: DEATH IN GAMES

◀ p. 35

Xatrix didn't pay a dime for the Richard Pryor cameo.

Case 09: Homo Flamien "Burned alive by flames" Location: Kingpin

With a flamethrower frontally trained over his body, the victim was immediately rendered blind, his skin seared and on fire, and screaming in agony. Once on fire, he was cooked from the outside in. He could not breathe due to the flames igniting all available oxygen. While gasping for air, he reflexively staggered around like a zombie then collapsed to the floor, briefly writhing as he continued to burn. Within 30 seconds, he was unconscious. After another 30 seconds he was dead, due to the brain having been cooked inside his skull. His eyes melted in their sockets and body fluids boiled off, while the gasses in his lungs and intestinal tract continued to heat and expand. Soon after, these gasses burst through weak points in damaged tissue, launching chunks of flaming flesh into the air.

CONSEQUENCES: Victim would be left flat on back, frozen in an attitude of agony, with all soft tissues charred to the bone. Smoke and steam would issue from the entire corpse. Most of the skull and extremities would be stripped of flesh and bare ribs could be seen poking through the chest. Finally, a sticky, black, congealed pool of cooked blood would have collected around him in a wide circle.

TREATMENT: If the fire could be extinguished and chemical ice body wraps applied within the first few seconds after ignition, he would still suffer second and third degree burns over roughly 80% of his body. He would likely suffer irreversible damage to the membranes of the nose, mouth, throat, and lungs. His eyes could not be saved. Even after months of intensive treatment and rehabilitation he would be severely handicapped and badly scarred. He would also live with chronic recurrent pain and possibly repeat reconstructive and plastic surgeries. Without this immediate help, stick a fork in him — he's done.

Locke realizes the career of "human fortune cookie" is overrated.

Case 10: Permanenti Biseparatum Tummius "Ripped in Two" Location: Revenent

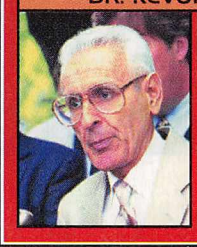
In a wrestling match gone horribly wrong, this fellow was bodily torn in half through the midsection, severing his spine at the third lumbar vertebra, ripping apart major blood vessels, intestines, kidney tubes, and abdominal muscles. Exposed in the lower half were torn intestines, which spilled digestive products. In the upper half, the stomach, spleen, and liver were revealed. Some of these organs had been ripped free and fell to the ground; others dangled loosely. Arterial blood loss from the upper portion was copious, accounting for approximately 50% of circulating blood, with another 25% lost from the lower portion.

CONSEQUENCES: Because of the tremendous volume of blood initially lost and further continual loss of required blood, the heart would seize up; the organ systems and brain would starve from lack of oxygen and begin to die. The injured party would lose consciousness after a couple of minutes of unspeakable distress, followed by death seven or eight minutes later.

TREATMENT: With such massive blood loss and injury to so many critical abdominal structures, surgical repair would be little more than an exercise in futility. He would be whiter than an albino KKK member in a blizzard on the North Pole, and just as cold.

OTHER DOCTORS OF DEATH

DR. KEVORKIAN



Occasionally, death is a kindness, like when you're playing Skydive!

DR. MENGELE

When you think "sick f-king Nazi bastard" – this is probably the guy you're thinking of

QUINCY

Jack Klugman proved that virtually any crime could be solved with a big nose

DR. WHO

Don't think so? You should see that wacky brit use his sonic screwdriver!

www.DailyRadar.com

Johnson met Smith & Wesson in the subway station.

Case 11: Magnum cum Castrato "Bullet to the Sack" Location: Soldier Of Fortune

A close range .45 caliber pistol shot penetrated both the penis and scrotum of the victim, shredding most of the scrotal sac, obliterating one of the testicles, and severing the penile shaft at mid-point. Due to disruption of the elaborate vascular network of the penis, blood began to spray instantly from the stump of the penis, in sharp contrast with the smaller volume of blood lost from the scrotal wound.

CONSEQUENCES: He would immediately grab his crotch and drop to the floor, attempting to stop the bleeding. Unattended, this wound could result in blood loss sufficient to induce shock and become an immediate threat to life within a couple of hours.

TREATMENT: As soon as possible, pelvic elevation, application of ice and local pressure, as well as the local administration of vasoconstricting medication would be used to stop the bleeding. Cleaning and irrigating the wound, in addition to antibiotics, would guard against infection from the contaminated bullet, hand, clothing and other non-sterile sources. If the wound was not properly cleaned and irrigated it would be radically invaded by infectious agents and the infection would spread to adjacent structures and organs, such as the bladder and kidneys, causing grave illness and probable death. Surgical repair would entail closure of scrotal remnant and wounded penis, followed by construction of new route for urinary discharge. Victim is likely to spend two very unpleasant weeks in the hospital, not including return visits and psychological counseling. Regardless, since re-attachment would be impossible, he would swing a lot higher from then on.

Case 12: Episodium ad Scooby-Dooius "Rollercoaster Accident" Location: Rollercoaster Tycoon

Two roller coaster trains traveling 40 MPH, each with several two-passenger cars in tow, collided head-on. Logged in the record books as one of the most bizarre amusement park mishaps, one train and all its cars simply exploded, as if constructed of dynamite. What was even more perplexing was the utter disappearance of both wreckage and victims.

CONSEQUENCES: Nobody knows. Spooky, ain't it?

TREATMENT: Contracting the most available medium would be one option, or book a reservation with the Ghostbusters, maybe? Who the hell knows, they disappeared man!

The safety bars weren't much use in this collision.

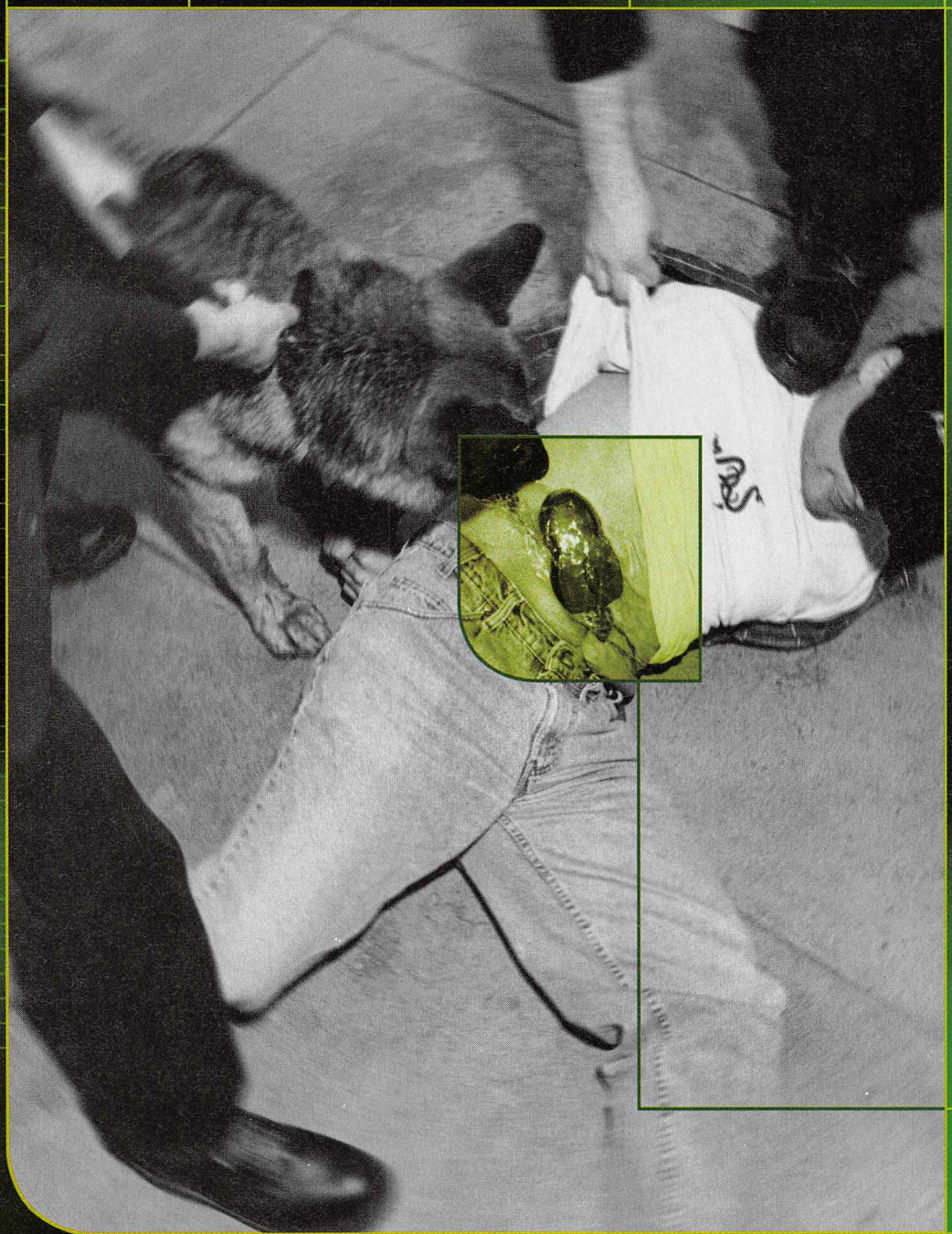
Case 13: BZZzzZZzius AARGHHiam Sizzlem "Tesla coil encounter" Location: C&C: Red Alert

This soldier was found prone with a thin layer of dried blood covering his skin, and even more blood originating from his eyes and nose running in dried rivulets down his face and chest. There was cooked fecal matter in his pants, his eyes had been displaced from their orbits, and an assortment of superficial discolorations suggestive of severe burns deep into the epidermis.

CONSEQUENCES: Starting with the moment the soldier was hit by the bolt of electricity, he would be knocked off his feet and begin to exhibit chest heaving, gurgling, foaming at the mouth, burning hair and skin, and bloody sweat. The current would cause his heart to cease and his breathing would stop. Within the first minute of sustained exposure, his eyeballs would pop out of their sockets, his bowels would disgorge their contents, and his brain would begin to cook.

TREATMENT: Treating the variety of permanent lethal damage sustained by the brain, heart, and nervous system would be fairly simple. Unzip a body bag, place him in it, and zip up the bag. The end!

so lethal some think



TRUE STORY:

At a recent competition a young gamer (no names) was destroying his opponents with rapid kills, unbelievable quickness and outstanding precision. Was he really that good or was he using cheat codes? The authorities had to know. They interrogated him – then discovered his Razer Boomslang mouse. Within seconds, the young gamer was tossed out, and the Razer outlawed from the competition. Seems Razer gave him, "An unfair advantage."

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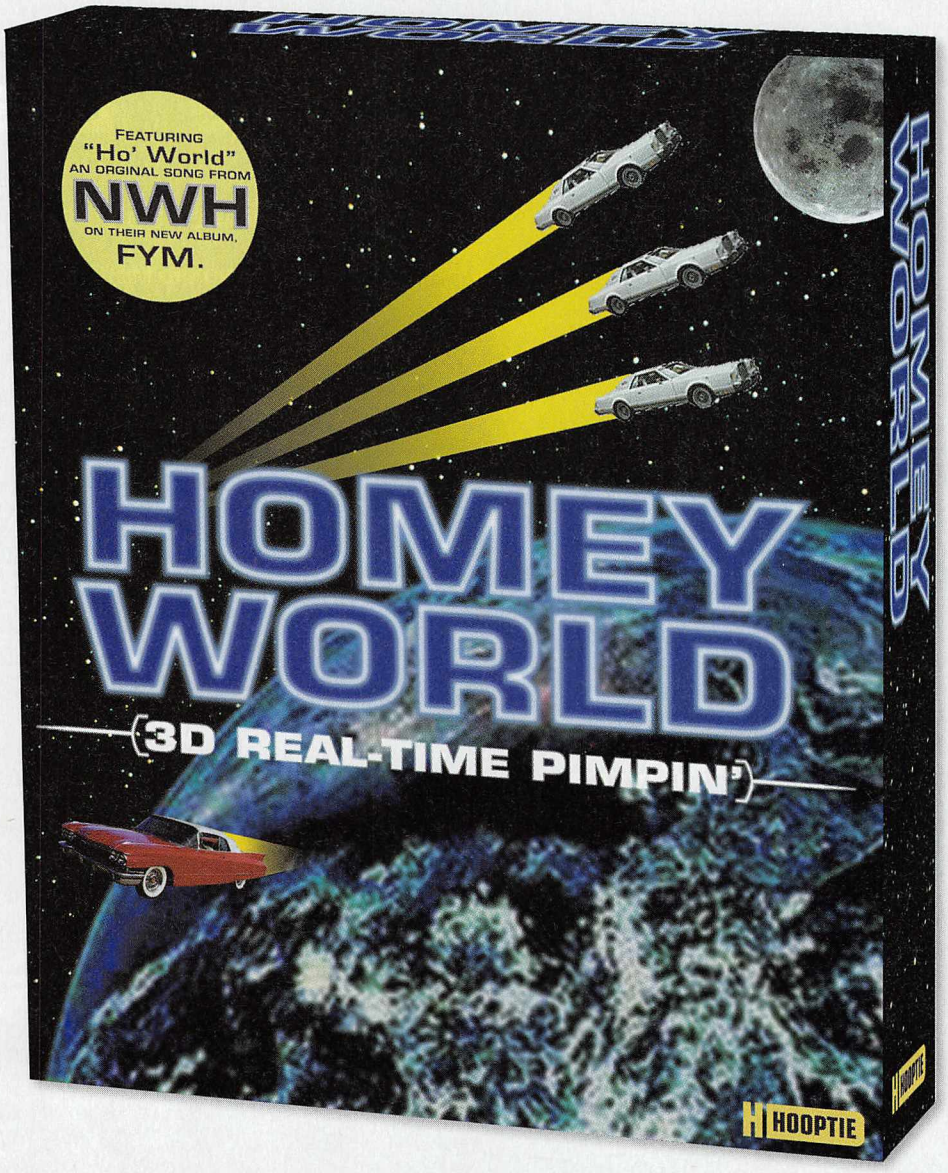
YO PEEP'S been trapped in a hostile world for 1,300 years

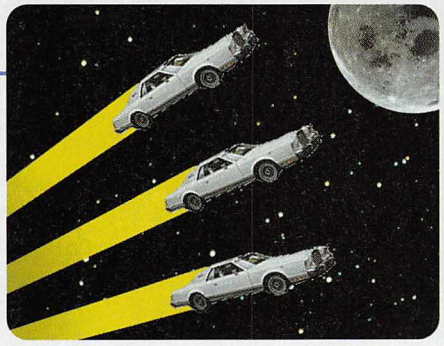
YO PAST is a busted old ruin and a crusty old 40 ouncer that points the way to where yo crib be at

YO PRESENT is a quest for answers in a five mile long hooptie that took 60 years to fill up with gas

DA FUTURE... be in jeopordy like a mo'fo



Caddies with vapor trails! Solar-powered wire rims! Check it!



Roll up in yo' Salvage Lincoln to gank hubcaps and car stereos from punkass beeotches

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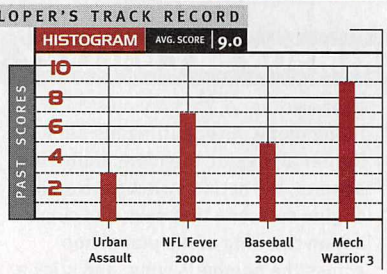
DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



Crimson Skies

If Errol Flynn and Louise Brooks flew planes ... (Who?)

Before you get worried about the headline, give me a chance to explain. An argument could certainly be made that *Crimson Skies* is a flight sim. As such, it follows that your response might be (as so eloquently stated by Mike Salmon),"Hey, wussy fly-boy-wannabes, what are you doing writin' about poncey flight sims? Leave that to the bearded fogies and bring back the guns 'n' chicks with big hooters."

Well, despite having to convince him that this wasn't a flight sim, there are flying aspects. In fact, *Crimson Skies* is all about flying. But more importantly, it's also about heroic derring-do, guns, rockets, zeppelins, damsels in distress, and more guns. It's not so much a flight sim, as a flight game.

Set in an alternate universe 1937, the United States has not recovered from the great depression and has split into regional factions, some areas enforcing pure madness like prohibition, others closing their borders to the outside world. Only air travel keeps communication open — and he who flies best and fastest and can shoot down the other guy makes a butt-load of cash. As Nathan Zachary, you're the daring leader of a Robin Hood-like gang, but rather than robbing the rich and giving to the poor, you're robbing the rich and partying like a maniac. Hence, the **PCXL** interest.

In the course of the 24 missions you're going to be doing plenty of flying, since that's what you do — fly 12 bizarrely constructed planes that, given the alternate universe setting doesn't conform to normal flight modeling. Again, this is where **PCXL** justifies its position: You're steeled with flying fast and low, dodging buildings and, in one fabulous scene, flying through an aircraft hangar as the door closes. It's the stuff of legends, and that's the purpose. To help make sure that legends are indeed made, the flight model is very forgiving. *Crimson Skies*' planes — the Avenger, Disruptor, and others — have different purposes for the different missions. Some are fighter-bombers, others nitrogen-fuelled speed demons and then there are experimental prototypes that you "'procure" in missions against the large manufacturers.

p. 46

With the help of a forgiving physics engine, you'll be able to zip between buildings in dramatic fashion.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER ··· Zipper Interactive/Microsoft
PUBLISHER ··· Microsoft
RELEASE DATE ··· August
API SUPPORT ··· Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE

THE HYPE

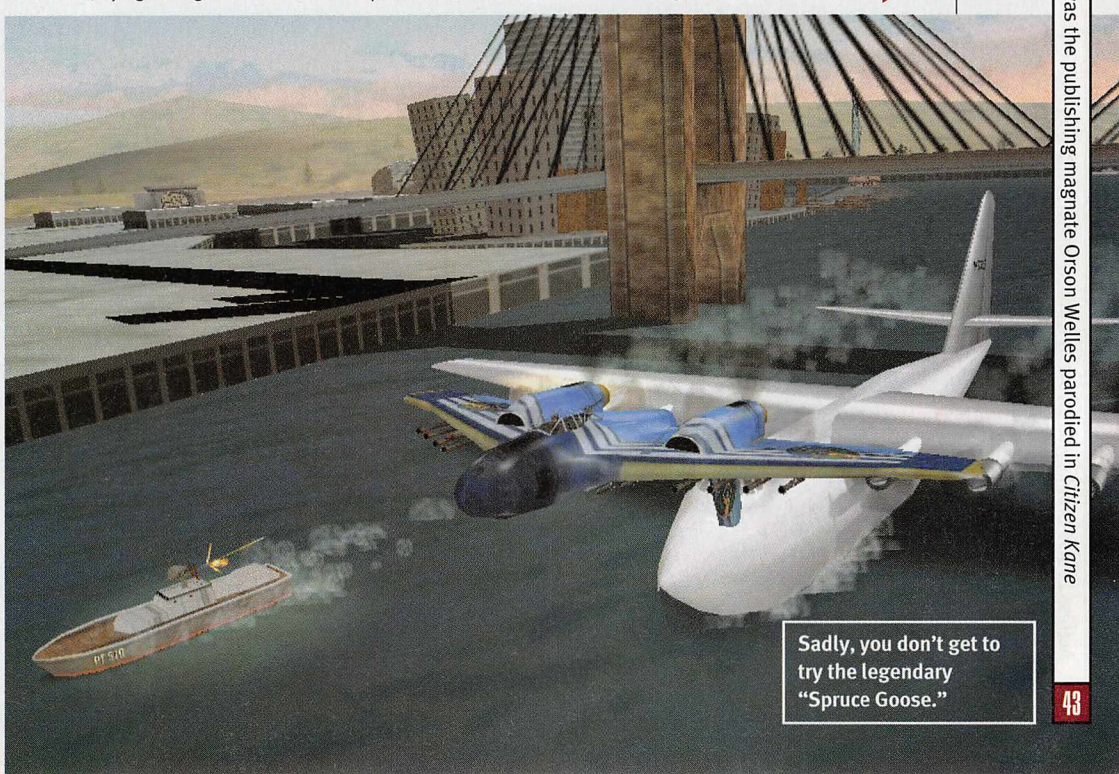
Zipper Interactive created *MechWarrior 3*. Plus, Microsoft's publishing wing is gaining a reputation for making even hardcore games extremely accessible.

THE HURDLE

Regardless of the "cool" factor, this is a flight-based game, with various elements that make it difficult to explain to the masses. (But that's why we're here.)

THE HIT

Take an alternate universe of the '30s, throw in hearty lashings of derring-do and simmer on a plate of detailed graphics and fast-paced action.

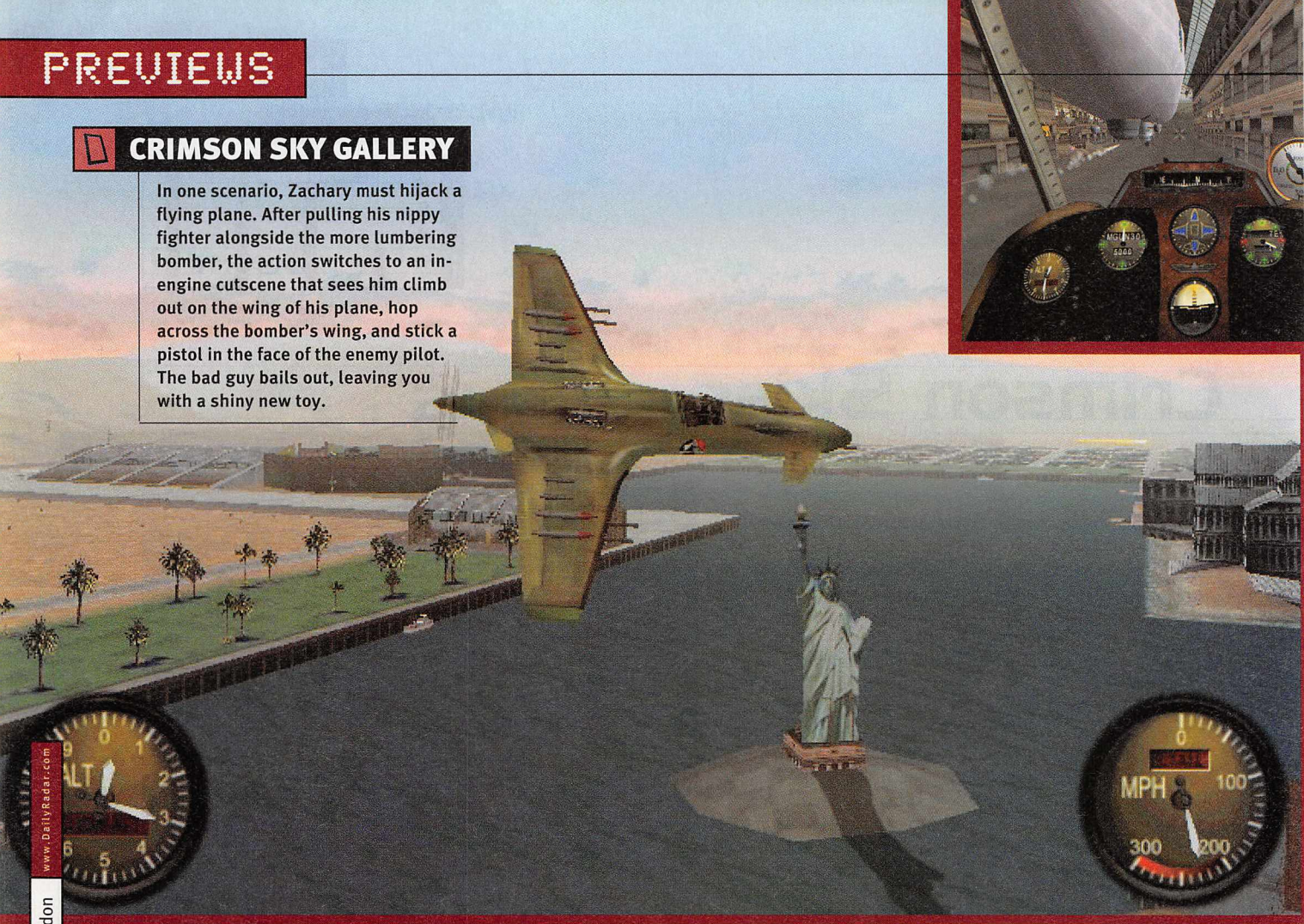


Sadly, you don't get to try the legendary "Spruce Goose."

Randolph Hearst was the publishing magnate Orson Welles parodied in *Citizen Kane*

CRIMSON SKY GALLERY

In one scenario, Zachary must hijack a flying plane. After pulling his nippy fighter alongside the more lumbering bomber, the action switches to an in-engine cutscene that sees him climb out on the wing of his plane, hop across the bomber's wing, and stick a pistol in the face of the enemy pilot. The bad guy bails out, leaving you with a shiny new toy.



Since you're flying close to the ground, a lot of time is being spent perfecting the scenery. Buildings were very well detailed in the early preview version that we saw, and the locations are inspired by real locations. Hollywood is spoofed in one scene where movie sets on the ground distract your eye from the action in the sky.

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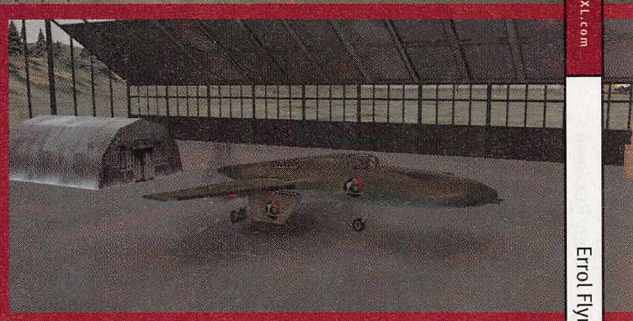
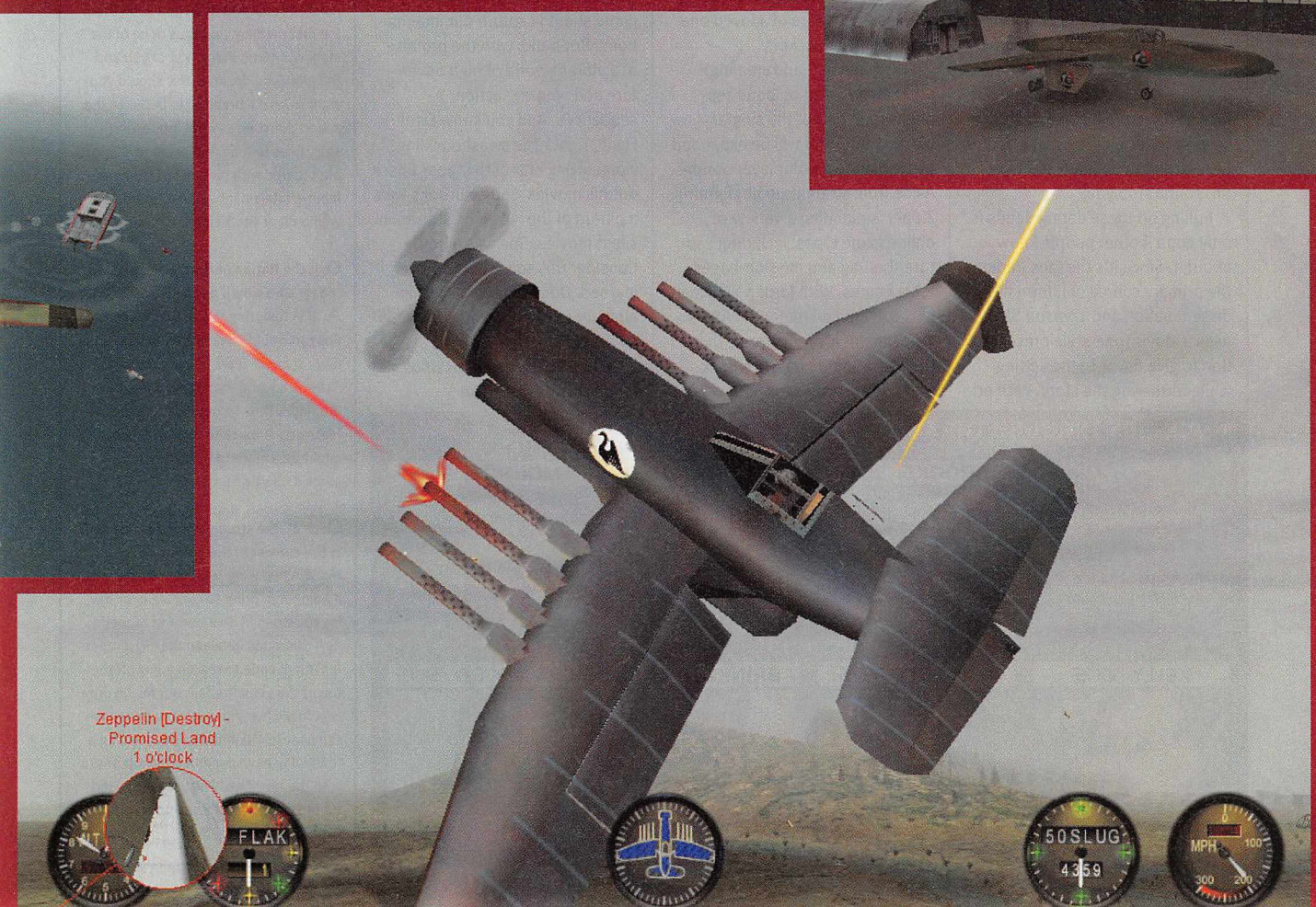
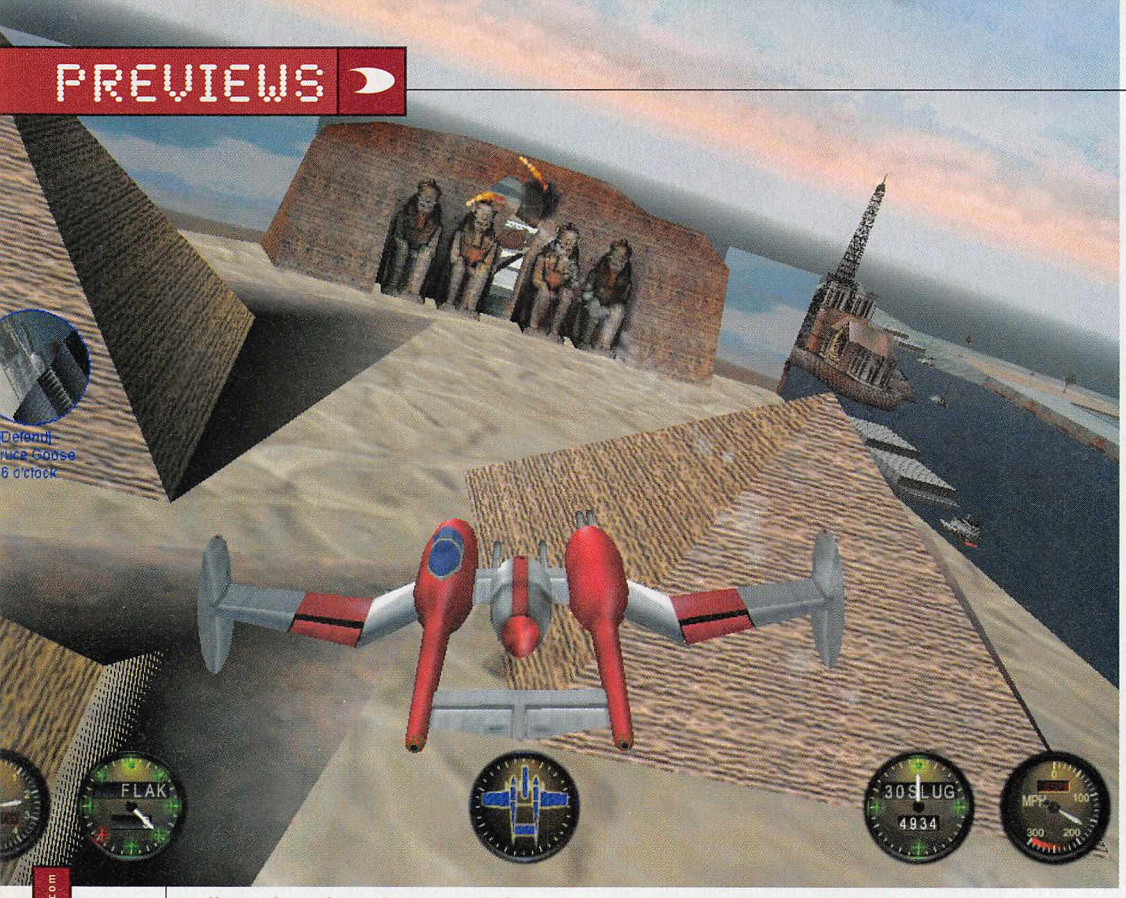
Actress Louise Brooks was also a well known dancer, and was the first to do the Charleston in London

To help keep you focused on the job at hand, a targeting reticule follows your next target in a style similar to that of traditional flight sims. You'll always know where the next bad guy is, since the purpose of the game is to help make sure that the legends are created, and the game will do what it can to help you make the headlines.





Errol Flynn was actually Australian and became a U.S. citizen in 1942



Hollywood sets keep the eye candy fresh, without taking the story outside the U.S.

p. 43

Since low flying is a large part of the dynamic, there's a "bounce" aid that gives you an extra push away from tragedy if you're trying to pull out of a deathly dive. In essence, the ground pushes up somewhat, the theory being that it's more of a buzz to skim that surface if you're pulling like mad to save your neck. Of course, if you're nose diving to oblivion, ain't nuttin' gonna stop you.

Pulling off these daring deeds is only good if other people know about it. Since it's the '30s, radio is the primary source of information dissemination and *Crimson Skies* uses a MovieTone-style presentation to give flavor to the setting while furthering the story. With primary, secondary and tertiary objectives available in the missions, the after-mission radio show will have a different story. You'll also collect little treasures from your exploits, such as the picture of a loved one that sits in the cockpit.

Flying against (and stealing) other aircraft and bulbous zeppelins is all part of the single-player game, and will be expanded in the planned multiplayer options. Aside from straight-up dogfighting, Zipper is planning a variety of online game types, including capture-the-flag and mission-based team games. With Jordan Weisman at the helm (co-creator of FASA's *BattleTech*), it's no surprise that the game world has a rich back story. There are pages of documentation about the different regional factions, plane makers, and competing groups that battle the skies for whatever plunder is available.

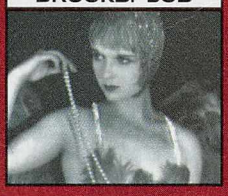
It's no small feat that a flying game should capture our imaginations. But it did, with the promise of a vibrant world of high adventure and amazing action sequences. And you know Errol Flynn, right? The swashbuckling, womanizing star of the '30s? Check out his movies. Louise Brooks was a pin-up of the '30s who starred in silent movies. She was a hottie. Consider this something you've learned. Don't worry, folks, this ain't yer pop's flight sim.

— **ROB SMITH** *sees himself as a modern day Errol Flynn*

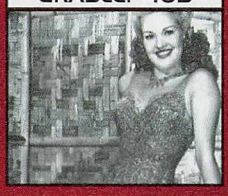
PIN-UPS THROUGH THE AGES

While the Black Swan might be turning heads in Zipper's alternate '30s setting as the "hot t" head of a rival gang, we had to consider who might be doing this job in our universe through the ages. So here they are, starting with the aforementioned '30s goddess, Louise ...

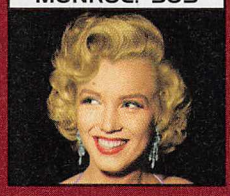
BROOKS: '30S



GRABLE: '40S

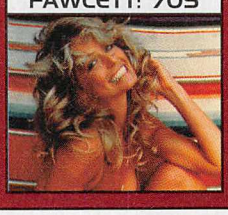


MONROE: '50S

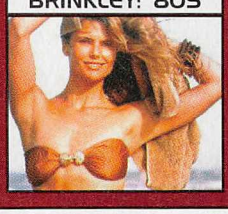


KELLY: '60S

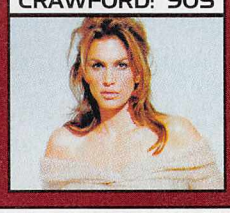
FAWCETT: '70S



BRINKLEY: '80S



CRAWFORD: '90S



5 QUESTIONS

MICROSOFT CREATIVE DIRECTOR JORDAN WEISMAN LED FROM THE FRONT TO ANSWER THE FIVE QUESTIONS

Q: What's the Black Swan's phone number? Who plays her in the game?
A: The Black Swan is a true woman of mystery and would sooner shoot you down than give you her digits. You'll have to keep playing and reading in the *Crimson Skies* universe if you want more of her.

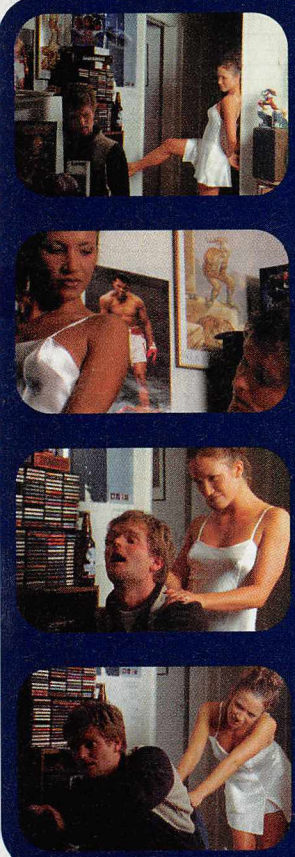
Q: How much of the board game have you used for the PC version?
A: Well, the important thing to remember is that *Crimson Skies* was conceived by Dave McCoy and myself as a computer game first. It was only out of frustration (and the desire to do a new board game after 10 years of absence from that field) that drove me to enlist the team and create the board game. So, since we conceived of the PC version first, the question would be better asked in the reverse — and the answer is that the board game is a pretty faithful version of the PC game but of course is limited to two dimensions.

Q: Exactly how many pages of background history are there? And how many people are going to read it all?
A: In the PC game there is no required reading at all. It is an action game from the first moment and thus none of the story will stand in the way of you and the glory you deserve. But should you want to take a breather in between the action there are several interesting story lines to read and listen to — most punctuated with pictures of dangerous femme-fatales or beautiful appreciative women that you helped.

Q: If the Nation of Hollywood existed today, who would be the leader?
A: It is tempting to say that Ronald Reagan would have gotten and held the title for many years — but *Crimson Skies* is a world that appreciates the dramatic. Thus I would venture that a real gutsy broad like Sharon Stone might be a modern version of our game's Charlie Steel.

Q: Of all the stunts, what do you think is the coolest in the game?
A: Wing-walking from your plane onto a bomber in order to capture it, or having to swoop in on a burning zeppelin as it descends between the skyscrapers of Fifth Avenue to rescue a guy off the top of the giant fireball. But my favorite is actually flying though a narrow passageway in Manhattan and receiving a rewarding newspaper article and photo with the headline "Pirate causes wind tunnel — ripping clothes from young women everywhere."

WE UNDERSTAND...



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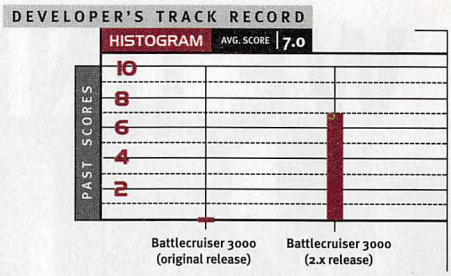


Battlecruiser Millennium

A phoenix from the ashes of the industry's most spectacular disaster

As much as I'm reluctant to dwell on the bullshit of *BC3K*'s history, it's a gaming industry legend more comical than *Daikatana*. Front and center is the game's boisterous overlord, Derek Smart. Game programming and design master or industry jester? Everyone who was around during the botched 1996 release of *BC3K* has an opinion, and frankly, it's all irrelevant now.

At the heart of the shameful incident (an overhyped game that was released and simply didn't work) was still a concept of incredible potential. More than just a space-based action game, it is really an open-ended space simulator — you trade, fight, hide, explore, fight, trade some more and get involved in the politics of Galcom (the human side) and 12 other races. For *Battlecruiser Millennium* (*BCM*), the sparks from the original game will be more accessible in the full Windows environment (as opposed to *BC3K*'s DOS origins) and hopefully many of the original's flaws redeemed (it was overly complex and graphically deficient).

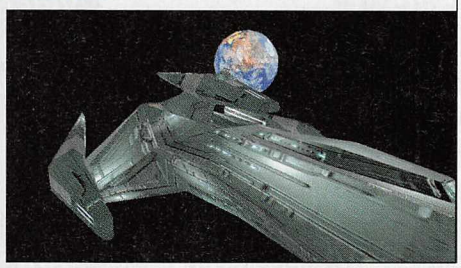
The single-player game has you working for Galcom, commanding a spaceship manned by a crew of AI-controlled characters. Within this familiar space-based combat game framework lies an entire universe to explore. Sure, you can follow missions directed by Galcom higher-ups that result in different combat experiences and even earn medals and experience points. But at the end of each mission you're in a new place with the opportunity to go where you like.

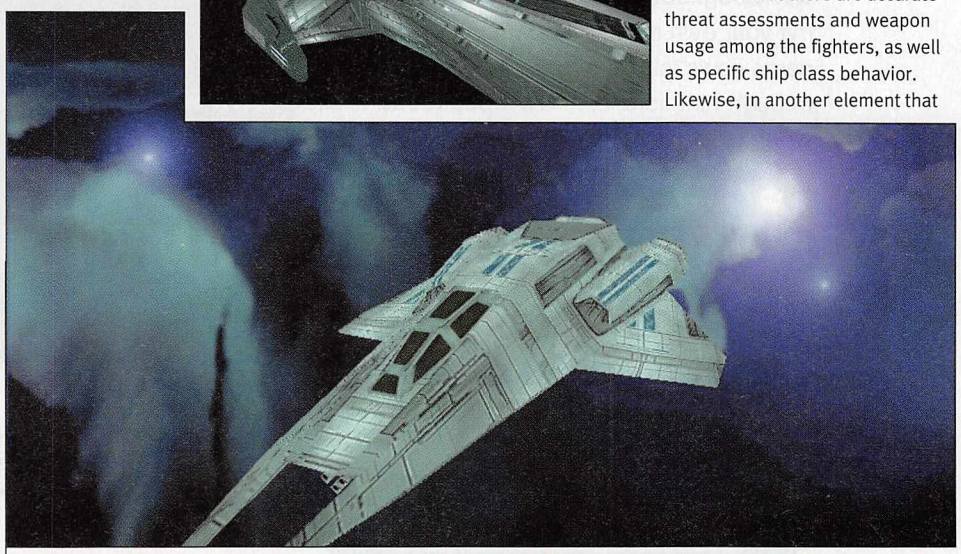
You can also play the game in a "free flight" mode where, like some Han Solo renegade, the galaxy is your playground. Missions consist of trading goods in different locations and escort functions among many, many others. What makes these familiar concepts special is their impact on the greater world around them — each action affects any number of related characters, locations or races.

As an idea of scale, the original *BC3K* featured over 70 planets, 140 moons, and loads of space stations. *BCM* has an area of about the same size to explore — that's a lot of space, a ton of stations and many hours of flying. The galaxy interface, given its size, can be daunting, with numerous planets spread out over the 3D vastness of space. This was also a problem with the original game, though most players were able to get their heads around the sheer volume of data eventually.

Powering the dynamic world, where your actions can impact numerous people and events, is what's touted as one of the most advanced AI systems in the industry. Sure, its creator talks a lot (self-promotion being one of Smart's strong suits), but hell, it does sound cool. Crew members on board your ship move with their own agendas — eating, working at their stations, resting — and simply act "real." Outside the ship, in the vastness of space, AI ensures that in combat there are accurate threat assessments and weapon usage among the fighters, as well as specific ship class behavior. Likewise, in another element that

By summer, this game should be fully operational.




Nice to see that *Battlecruiser* is adhering to the Unoriginal Spaceship Design Act, which states that if you are going to create a space game, then all ships should resemble those found in *Star Wars*.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER ···› 3000AD
PUBLISHER ···› 3000AD/Interplay
RELEASE DATE ···› Summer 2000
API SUPPORT ···› Direct3D and OpenGL

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED | EXCITED | AROUSED

THE HYPE

Seems everyone is focusing on the personality behind *BCM*. The hype has been bad, but the latest version has been well received. Now there's a morbid curiosity.

THE HURDLE

Derek Smart upset a lot of people during the *BC3K* debacle. The game should be judged on its own merits, but many will be reluctant to trust the franchise.

THE HIT

The concept is fantastic. It's the same premise that causes people to refer to the classic *Elite* in hushed tones. *BC3K* is the *Elite* of here and now.

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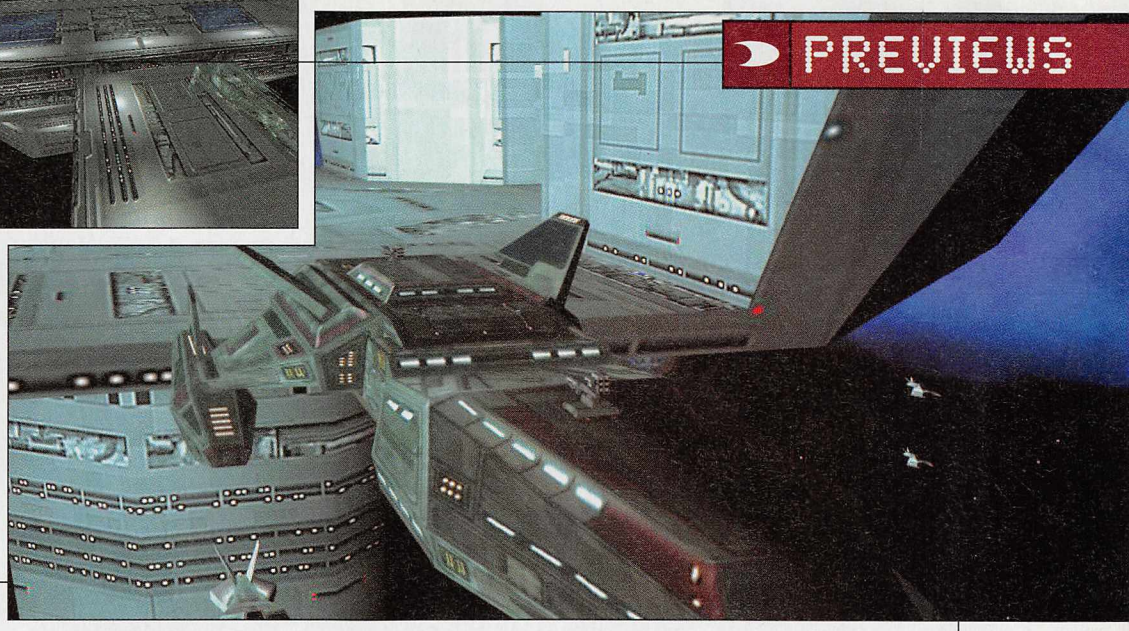
Price on e-Bay for a can of "New Coke" from original run in 1985: $5 — we wouldn't suggest drinking it

Look closely at Earth and you can spot Oliver Stone's ego.



Amazingly detailed space environments and massive mother ships give us great hope for this game.

5 QUESTIONS

PCXL FORCED THE *BATTLECRUISER* PATRIARCH TO ANSWER THE FIVE QUESTIONS IN JUST A FEW SHORT SENTENCES.

Q: In one sentence — just one — sum up the *BC3K* saga.
A: A classic example of what not to do when you don't have a clue what you're doing when you start doing it.

Q:. What do you want to be known for in the games industry?
A: A gamer turned developer who got in there, broke all the rules, stuck in there and then weathered the storm.

Q: Is there anyone left in the industry that you admire?
A: Hmmm, that's a loaded question. I guess since I'm still in the industry, I don't count? No, really, I don't particularly admire people, especially people in this industry. I'm too selfish and self-centered to afford such emotional pleasures. However, if I were to pick one person, it truly would be Johnny Wilson [bearded former Editor in Chief of *Computer Gaming World*]. Yeah, I know, he's not a game developer, but he is part of this industry. Johnny's name is synonymous with the honorable and "cleaner" side of the industry proper. For what it's worth, I've only met him once, back when I first started out.

Q: How many people, aside from yourself, are working on the *BC* projects?
A: As of this writing (2/3/00), 17.

Q: It's E3, there's a massive fire in the convention hall, everyone's trapped but you. Who (or what) would you try to save?
A: The partially naked lady dancing at the booth next door. Saving anyone else would probably mean either saving a developer likely to unleash another clone of a tired old franchise, a marketing exec, or worse, a game reviewer. You can't go wrong with partially naked women.

separates this from the morass of space shooters like *Freespace* and *I-War*, there are planet surface-based units, such as SAM sites and probes that all require their own AI routines in order to act effectively within the game world.

Possibly the most intriguing element of *BCM* is Tactical Engagements (TE), set to be released as a separate add-on. Due to issues with the outdoor engine in the main game, and the indoor engine for TE, there will be an odd interchangeability between the two that allows for some intriguing combat situations such as hostile boarding of your ship. With TE, you will be able to lead the resistance as the Combat Officer in first-person, grabbing a weapon from the armory and fighting alongside the on-board marines (who you can later hang with in Operations). Should you die, TE will kick you back to the bridge in *BCM* and let you clone the leader for another assault, or even go down as commander (and if you die, it's game over). Whatever happens within the TE actions (the intrusion repelled, for example) will be recorded in the main *BCM* logs (but if you lose marines in the fight, that will be noted in the *BCM* reports). This opens up a whole new angle of potential combat possibilities, and is something that will be expanded further when the integrated indoor/outdoor engine is unveiled in the next sequel, *BC3020AD*, slated for Spring 2001.

BCM will also feature an expansive multiplayer option that lets you play as any of the 12 races and 25 castes. When joining a game server, you'll be placed wherever your chosen race/caste combo specifies, and you can simply go out exploring again. AI-controlled NPCs can be included, letting you get involved in team struggles against AI enemies.

The whole project is once again ambitious, but the potential continues to grow. Let's hope that Smart has learned lessons from his rigors thus far in the industry. With great graphic support helping to create a distinctive look to the different elements of the galaxy, *BCM* will hopefully enjoy a smoother journey to store shelves, and better consumer reaction.

This game may still need to be dumbed down in order to attract the wider audience, but it's certain that any discussion of forthcoming space sims such as *Starlancer*, *Tachyon*, and *Freelancer* should include *Battlecruiser Millennium* as genuine competition.

— **ROB SMITH** *thinks Derek Smart deserves a break, and hopes the game speaks for itself*

OTHER EPIC FAILURES

The original *Battlecruiser* is one of the most classic blunders in the history of games, but it couldn't really compare to some of these massive failures

NEW COKE

THE PITCH ···› Secret formula set to revolutionize cola
THE UTTER FAILURE ···› The multi-billion dollar campaign and the original "ass" cola lasted only a few months before "Classic" Coke resumed its rightful place in America's sugar-coated belly

ARCH DELUXE

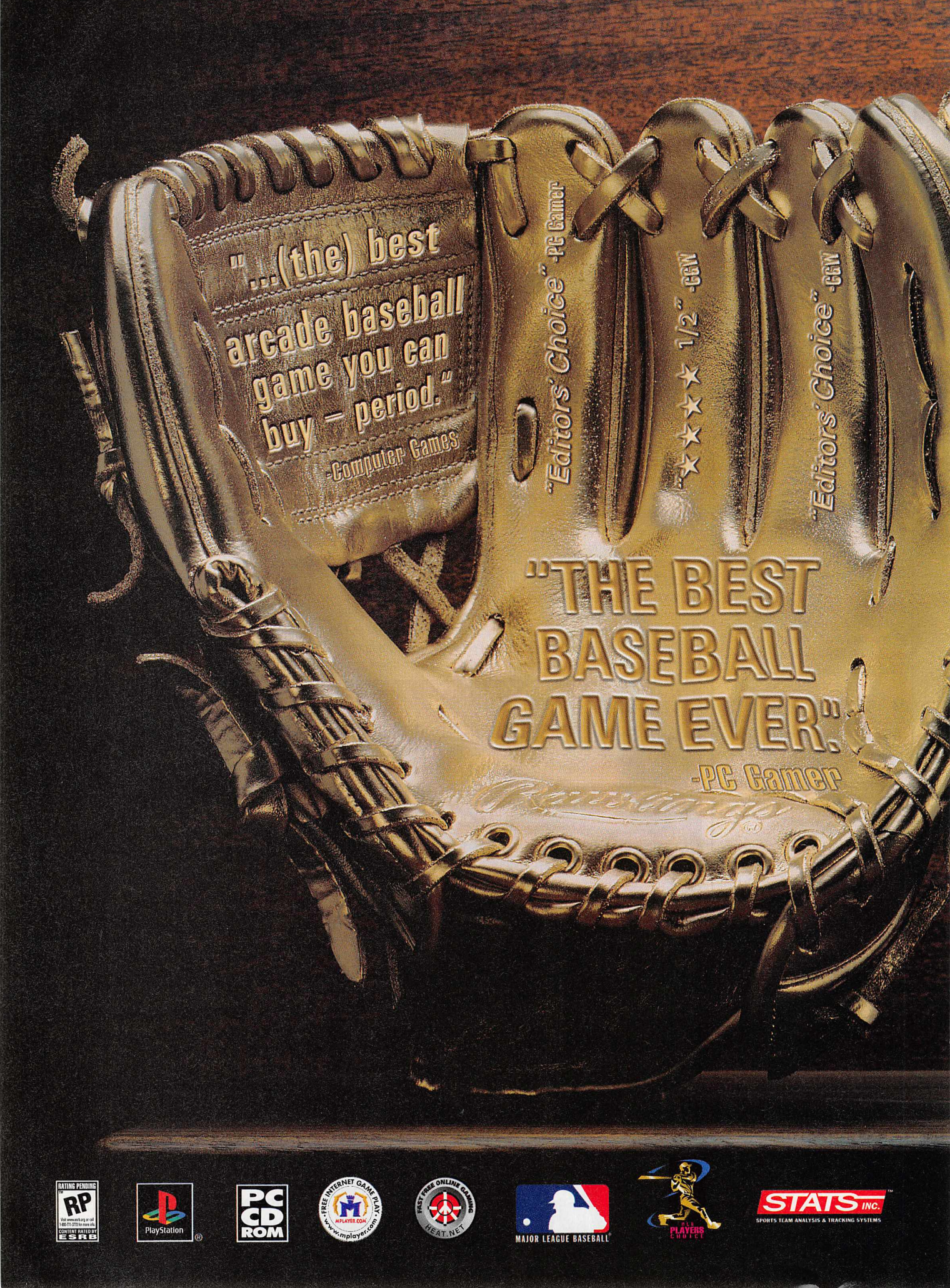
THE PITCH ···› McDonald's food for adults
THE UTTER FAILURE ···› Adults like the Big Mac, and nobody wants lettuce from McDonald's

THE MILLENNIUM

THE PITCH ···› Destruction, fire, brimstone, martial law, and Y2K hi-jinks
THE UTTER FAILURE ···› The world is still here, computers still run, and freaks in the Midwest have a ton of extra supplies

COP ROCK

THE PITCH ···› A musical TV show with dancing cops, kinda like "Hill Street Blues" meets "Fame"
THE UTTER FAILURE ···› Nobody wants to see dancing and singing cops — ever!


"...(the) best arcade baseball game you can buy – period."
-Computer Games
"Editors' Choice" -PC Gamer
★★★★ 1/2 -CGW
"Editors' Choice" -CGW
"THE BEST BASEBALL GAME EVER."
-PC Gamer
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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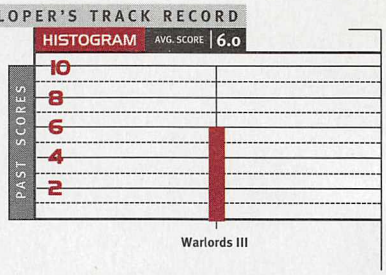
DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



Warlords Battlecry

An RTS with killer AI

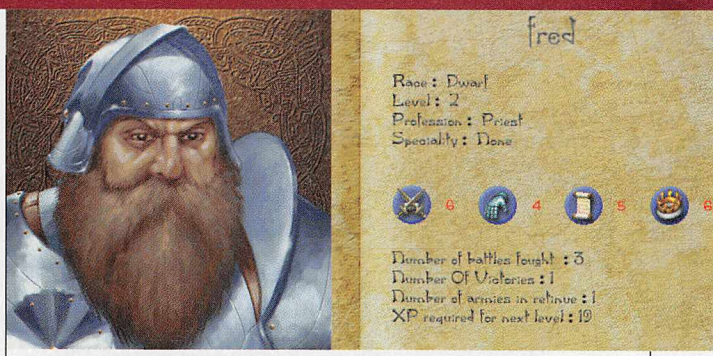
I know what you're thinking and I've been wondering about it too. After the endless tramp, tramp, tramp of mindless RTS clones, who needs yet another RTS, especially from a group of developers noted for their fine turn-based strategy games?

String 'em up, right? Make them first against the wall when the Originality Revolution comes ... But wait a second. The guys at SSG are extremely good at what they do. And one of their shining achievements is AI (in fact, they're fanatical about it), which also happens to be one of the things most RTS developers have no clue about. SSG promises that there will be none of the cheats that *Tiberian Sun* or *Age of Empires II* offered at higher levels of difficulty, giving more resources, all-seeing abilities, or a faster production rate to the computer. Your AI enemies won't play as well as expert human opponents, but they may play well enough to make you look bad, and feel worse. And that's what counts.

Like the turn-based *Warlords* series, *Battlecry* employs groups of heroes, basic units, and powerful, allied monsters (griffins, unicorns, etc.). Your heroes will possess a much greater range of spells than revealed in the series — over 80 in all. Spell effects look terrible in the turn-based *Warlords* games, but will be been reworked dramatically for this RTS. Many aggressive spells have been added, sporting excellent 3D effects. The flickering explosion of the Lightning Bolt in particular has gotta hurt.

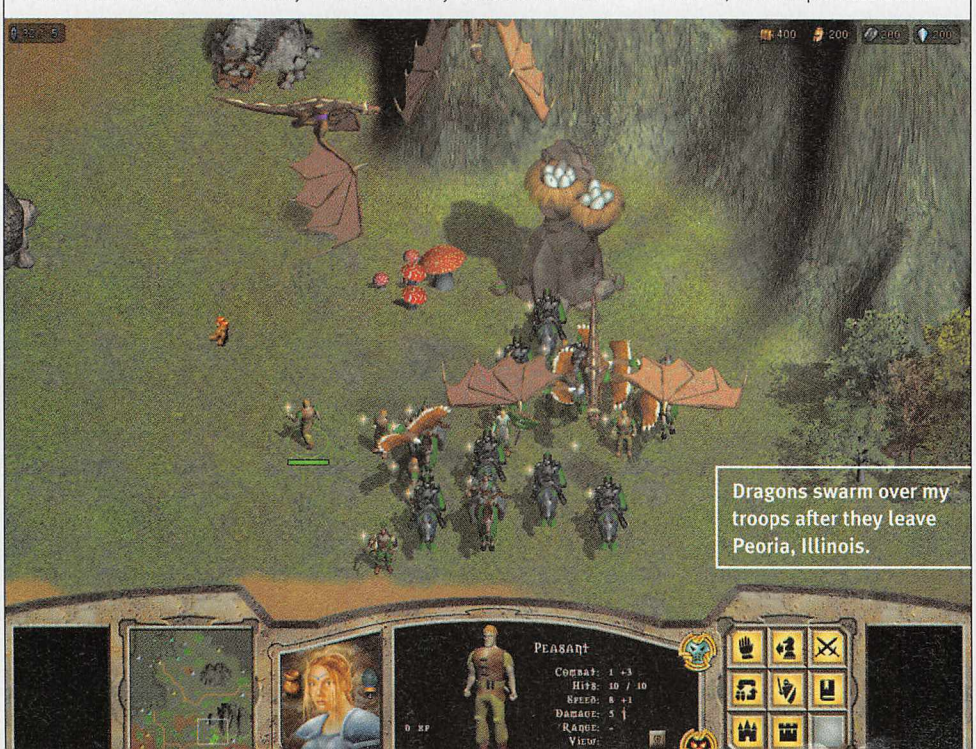
On the debit side, there won't be any diplomacy in *Battlecry*. The development team says that gaining an ally or enemy in mid-scenario would completely destroy game balance. While that's clearly true of campaigns, I can't see what the problem would have been including it in the many stand-alone scenarios planned for the game, or even in the scenarios you randomly generate. The old *Warlords* diplomacy system was only proximity-based, after all, and that should have easily transferred into *Battlecry*.

Network play via the Internet should support up to six players. Expect a lot more diversity than *Total Annihilation* offers when veteran commanders take to the field, since your main character can belong to any of 16 different classes, with unique class-based



Here's one of the default heroes, Fred the Dwarf.

The tutorial sees you through basic movements.



Dragons swarm over my troops after they leave Peoria, Illinois.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER ···› SSG
PUBLISHER ···› SSI
RELEASE DATE ···› Spring 2000
API SUPPORT ···› D3D

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED | EXCITED | AROUSED

THE HYPE

It's the same team that produced the highly successful turn-based fantasy strategy series. It'll have most of the familiar *Warlords* elements.

THE HURDLE

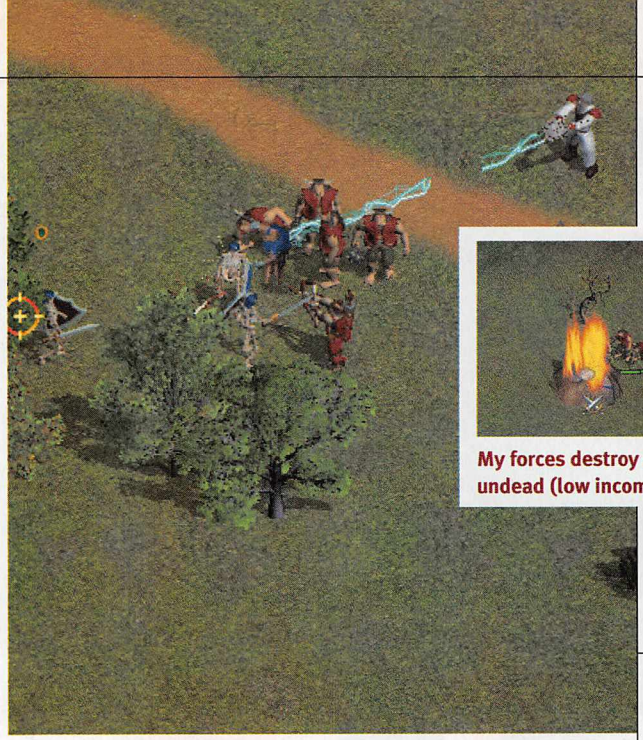
Doing all the typical RTS elements very well doesn't make the results any more distinctive than a standard RTS. Let's hope they rise above the mediocrity.

THE HIT

SSG promises to deliver more world-beating AI, new spells, and detailed 3D effects. It'll be a welcome splash in this notoriously congested market.

www.DailyRadar.com

The snake merchant in *Blade Runner* has a Millennium Falcon tattooed on his forehead



My forces destroy a barrow of the undead (low income housing).

Mmm ... Lightning Bolts turn skeletons into a side order of extra crispy strips.

My heroic Paladin uses the Silver Arrow spell to kill a vicious peasant. That obnoxious cow is next.

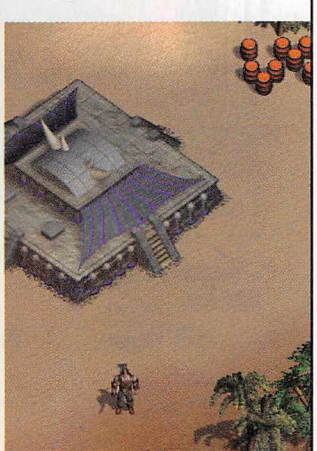
skills and spells. A paladin leader won't play quite the same way as a priest, or a mage. There will also be 10 single and multiplayer victory conditions, which can be combined to provide different challenges.

On the other hand, we question SSG's intended policy of letting online *Battlecry* veterans play newbies with the promise of low experience points for a veteran win, and very high experience points to the newbie victory. This handicapping has a potential for great abuse, since it's an easy way for some experienced player to bring a newbie pal (or a paying client) quickly up to a high level.

As for stand-alone campaigns, there will be two, with various branches for a total of 36 linked scenarios. Don't expect earthshaking originality, here. As with all RTS games, the plot structure, which involves the usual battle between Good and Evil, is just a frame on which to hang scenarios. (You want something more complex? Go read *War and Peace*.) Certainly one nice *Battlecry* feature allows you to carry across your hero, their skills, and items from scenario to scenario, and not just in the scenarios of a given campaign, either. You can take your advancing hero between randomly generated scenarios, and the AI will generate opponents sufficient to provide a solid challenge.

Add SSG's AI and some killer visual effects into an RTS format and mix well. The results in *Battlecry* look set to summon hordes of players when it appears on shelves this spring.

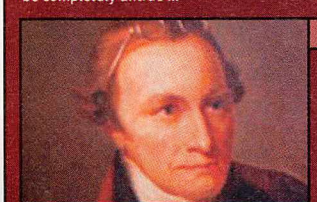
— **"BARRY BRENESAL"** *is another word for "highly caffeinated brainwave pattern"*



You can customize your own scenario during sick leave.

FAMOUS BATTLECRIES

Every great war or event is marked by cries that inspire, lift the soul, and often prove to be completely untrue ...



PATRICK HENRY

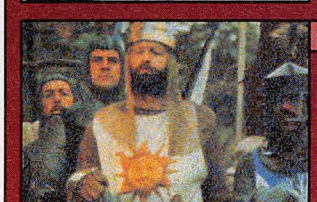
BATTLECRY: "Give me liberty or give me death"
END RESULT: Death

WILLIAM WALLACE

BATTLECRY: "You can take my life but you cannot take my freedom"
END RESULT: The English took both, and in gruesome fashion

THE FRENCH

BATTLECRY: "We surrender"
END RESULT: When the French do battle there is always plenty of crying



THE KNIGHTS WHO SAY NEE

BATTLECRY: "Nee!"
END RESULT: They are no longer the Knights Who Say Nee. They are now "The Knights Who Say Ecky-ecky-ecky-ecky-pikang-zoom-boing-mumble-mumble"

5 QUESTIONS

DEXTER CHOW, MATTEL'S EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FOR *WARLORDS BATTLECRY*, DISCUSSED GAME DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY WITH US.

Q: Honestly, do *Warlords* fans really want an RTS?
A: Our marketing team sampled the opinions of 4000+ *Warlords* fans, and they wanted to see an RTS. The #1 game favored by these players was not *Heroes of Might and Magic* or *Civilization*, but *Warcraft II*.

Q: What kills a good game?
A: The largest single factor is lack of attention to detail at every level — installation, interface, game balance, rewards for good actions, and catching bugs. Problems at all levels can be attributed to lack of attention to detail.

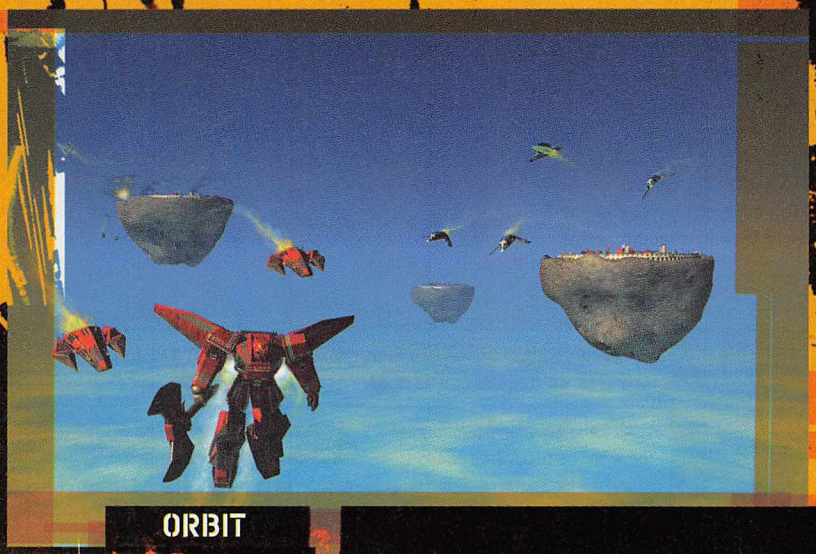
Q: What's your favorite game of all time — and your least favorite?
A: *Dungeon Master I* is my favorite because it was cutting-edge and a totally new gameplay dynamic. It was also the first RTS dungeon game. My least favorite would be *Terra Nova*. The interface was so horribly bad, and it could have been good. Those are the games you hate the most.

Q: Speaking of bugs, what's your opinion of *Ultima IX*?
A: It reminds me of *Outpost* — bugs everywhere. I also don't expect my Pentium 3500 to play like an old PC. And you'd think they would have learned about announcing one kind of game and producing another from *U8* — but they didn't, and they made the same mistakes. And *U9* frankly has a *Zelda* feel.

Q: Which role would you play in any film, if you had your choice?
A: Harrison Ford in *Blade Runner*.

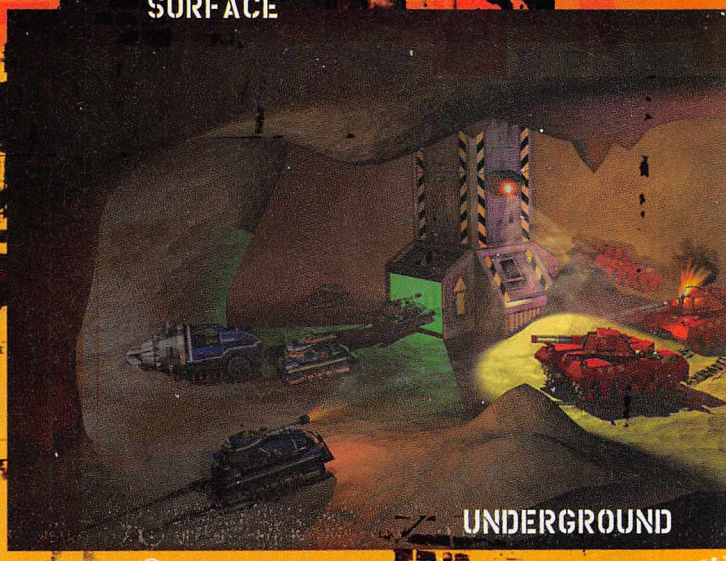
Dustin Hoffman was originally slated to star in *Blade Runner*. Definitely not a good choice, definitely

METAL-MASHING COMBOTS TAKE TACTICAL BATTLE TO ENTIRELY NEW LEVELS.



ORBIT

SURFACE



UNDERGROUND

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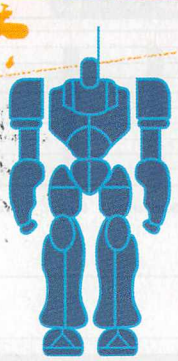
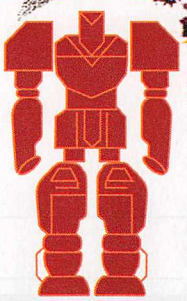
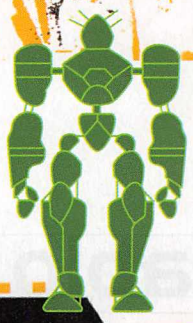


RIMTECH
Efficient and balanced, Rimtech's arsenal is a mix of kinetic and energy-based weapons. Katana swords and EMP torsos are just a sample of their repertoire.



MILAGRO
The Mil-Agro CorporoNation wields its way with might and metal. The most primitive, they feature metal shredding tools like gigantic battle axes and Howitzer-equipped torsos.



NEUROPA
Neuropa's religious fanaticism drives them to acquire the alien Hedoth technology. The rotating electroblade arm and cammo torso are some of their divine inspirations.

METAL FATIGUE™

3-TIERED GAME PLAY, 3 TIMES THE STRATEGY, AND COMBOTS OVER 3 STORIES HIGH

Metal Fatigue lets you build and command behemoth combots. Armed with parts like sonar legs, jet pack torsos and Gattling gun arms, you can fight for upgrades or simply sever your enemies limbs and attach them to your own forces. Best of all, you control units across 3 levels simultaneously in what has been described as part real-time strategy, part 3D action, and all together revolutionary.

WWW.METALFATIGUE.COM

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 39

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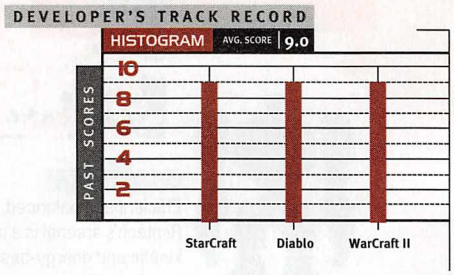
RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



Diablo II

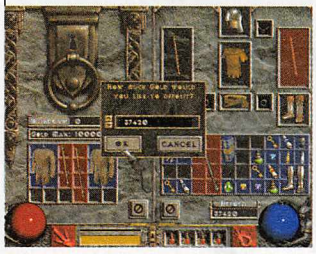
What's left to say?

So we took a trip down to visit the offices of Blizzard with the intention of discovering every last ounce of information on *WarCraft III*. (The results are on the cover and page 17.) "Would you like to take a look at *Diablo II* while you're here?" we're asked. "Hell, yeah," was our uncouth reply, but it scored us a couple of hours actually playing the game that millions of gamers have been waiting to get their hands on for months. The primary motivation (aside from our own geeky infatuation with being among the privileged few who've played the game) was to decide if this increasingly long wait is worth the disappointment as each proposed release date slips by.

Given a debug version of the game that would let me cheat all the way to the bitter end, all I wanted to do was start at the beginning and take my own sweet time through the unfolding story. (There were not so subtle threats from the designers should we actually commit the mortal sin and witness the finale). Perhaps it's a personality disorder, but the idea of cheating was inconceivable. So, fledgling Paladin created (yep, paladin — has to be a personality disorder), I started chatting to the town inhabitants (my character did, not me). Sure enough, badness is unleashed, times have changed, and there's room for another great hero.

So let's pretend you don't know squat about *Diablo II*. (Yeah, right.) There are five character classes — Paladin, Barbarian, Necromancer, Amazon, and Sorceress — through four Acts (though the fourth Act is a relatively short finale) of randomly generated dungeons. Each of the three Acts comprises a main town area where various characters supply back story and quests, as well as trade magic and non-magic items. If you played *Diablo I* this is all familiar. The main difference is that this time, it's just much bigger.

I jumped to the second and third Acts, and the detailed levels and pure size of the monsters didn't disappoint. As the scenery changes to a jungle theme in Act Three, there's water, rickety bridges over the swamp, and



No more dumping junk on the ground in this sequel.

What keeps skeletons from falling apart? I mean, they shouldn't be able to move, right? Just a passing thought.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER ···› Blizzard
PUBLISHER ···› Havas
RELEASE DATE ···› May 2000 (really!)
API SUPPORT ···› Direct3D and OpenGL

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED — EXCITED — AROUSED

THE HYPE

It's *Diablo II*, sequel to one of the biggest games of all time. The core design hardly shifts from the original ... "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

THE HURDLE

Well, there isn't one. Okay, so it will be over six months late, but there isn't a game out there with more potential buyers than this one.

THE HIT

More characters, worlds to explore, monsters, items, life sucked away in front of the computer — and the completely cheat-free battle.net zone.

DEVIL MADE 'EM DO IT

DAVID BERKOWITZ

DEVILISH DEEDS: The "Son of Sam" terrified lovers on the streets of New York. This former postal worker killed six after a 6,000-year-old spirit invaded his neighbor's Labrador and commanded him to commit the crimes. He got his moniker from a note he left at the scene of one shooting which read: "I am a monster. I am the Son of Sam."
DEVIL'S INVOLVEMENT: Possessed dog and said "kill"

JOHN WAYNE GACY

DEVILISH DEEDS: Enjoyed handcuffing victims, anally raping them, beating them to a pulp, offering to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, reciting verses from the Bible, and mercifully strangling them to death
DEVIL'S INVOLVEMENT: Didn't give them dinner until after the anal raping

PEDRO LOPEZ

DEVILISH DEEDS: The most prolific serial killer in the world admittedly murdered nearly 300 young girls on a three-nation killing spree. Authorities doubted he could have actually killed this many until he quickly showed them a graveyard of 50 of his most recent victims
DEVIL'S INVOLVEMENT: He IS the devil

Welcome to the jungle. We've got fun and flames.

5 QUESTIONS

***DIABLO II* PRODUCER MATT HOUSEHOLDER VALIANTLY PUT HIMSELF IN THE FIRING LINE OF THE TRAGICALLY INANE FIVE QUESTIONS**

Q: You done yet? If not, why not?
A: *Diablo II*, while content complete, still has not released. We are currently working on the new battle.net architecture, play balancing, and debugging the game.

Q: Is there an office sweepstakes to guess the first week sales of *Diablo II*? I'll run it if you're interested.
A: We're not really guessing about sales figures at this point. It seems a little premature when the game isn't finished yet. But, we hope that it's our biggest launch ever.

Q: So, what are your thoughts on a *Diablo III*?
A: Honestly, we haven't thought very much about what Blizzard North will do after this. Everyone here is eager to see how *Diablo II* is received and then begin concept and design work on our next big thing ...

Q: Are you absolutely guaranteeing that the new battle.net setup will be cheat proof?
A: There are two kinds of *Diablo II* games — Realm Games and Open Games. Realm Games are played on Blizzard's battle.net servers. Open Games work much like the original *Diablo* — they run on players' computers. We are certain that players will not be able to hack their Realm character save files or implement any Realm game cheats of the "Town Kill" variety. Our battle.net server system runs all the Realm games and stores all the Realm characters in a special secure database. Of course, people are very clever, so we can't rule out someone discovering something that would give them an unfair advantage in a Realm game. If that happens, Blizzard will respond with a patch to eliminate it. We can't guarantee anything about Open Games.

Q: An Amazon, Barbarian, Necromancer, Paladin and Sorceress walk in to a bar ... what happens next?
A: After telling a few jokes about the NPCs in town, they begin swapping recipes for the Horadric Cube.

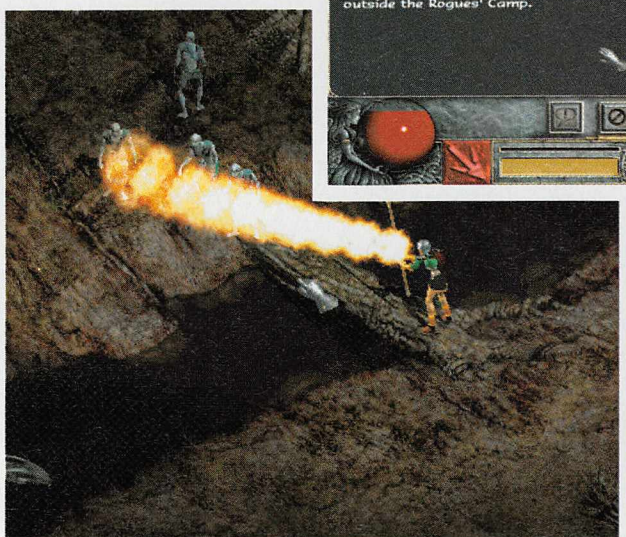
dense undergrowth. Hidden in there are lumbering monsters such as the Jungle Hunters and wooden Thorned Hulks. Since everything is bigger — the weapons, monsters, and damage sustained — a health bar indicates how much damage each monster has taken against its total amount. It's a very helpful tool in the mass melees, where your character becomes surrounded by 10 or more beasts clamoring for a piece of your hide.

Numerous other tweaks will make the gameplay more intuitive as well. The benefit of a health potion now appears shaded in the health vial as the actual health increase slowly rises. Although the temptation is to throw single points on certain skills to get to the more powerful ones faster, it's often better to specialize on lower skills to ensure survival through the mid-levels. Of course, when you die, it's not over. A "private stash" chest in the town will store your possessions, less a powerful item such as your prized weapon, ensuring a penalty for dying.

So what's taking so damn long? In a word: Battle.net. The move to the client-server set up (thereby negating most cheating problems at the source) has taken longer to develop than anticipated. The guild halls for storage of items and social elements have been designed, but Blizzard admitted to problems hiring talented senior level network coders to get this large-scale task completed. The game is due to go into beta stage soon (likely by the time you read this) and should be fairly complete by then, hopefully not requiring a *StarCraft*-esque cycle of testing.

The purpose of this preview: To allay any fears that *Diablo II* may have design problems or fun issues. It's a guarantee (more solid than any *Daikatana* predictions) that this game will be worth the wait. The four Acts are set to be so finely balanced that they suck every last hour out of your game playing time. And when it's done, there will be battle.net. Oh yeah.

— **ROB SMITH** *pulled his first "all-nighter" to finish* Diablo



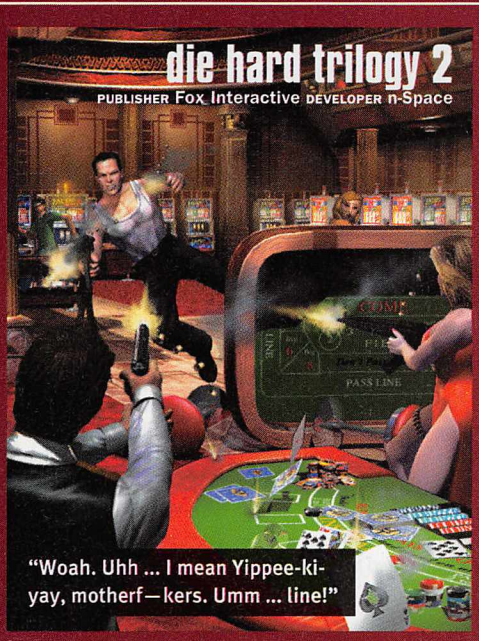
The exclamation point over an NPC lets you know he wants to talk, while a detailed log tracks your quests.

The worst "murderess" in history was Susannah Olah, a Hungarian nurse who killed over 100 people

"Money Shots" is our new monthly gallery of screenshots from upcoming games. If, as "they" say, a picture is worth a thousand words, then these two pages also contain 9,000 words — without a spelling error. A **PCXL** record! Send feedback on "Money Shots" to letters@pcxl.com

die hard trilogy 2

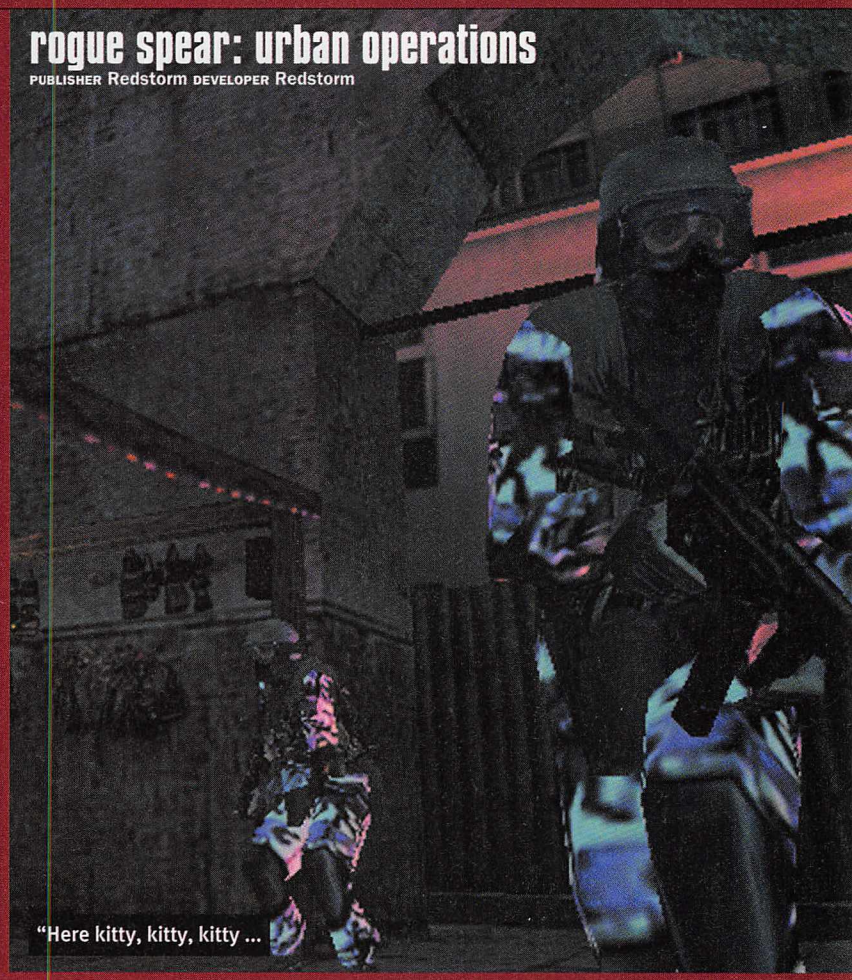
PUBLISHER Fox Interactive DEVELOPER n-Space



"Woah. Uhh ... I mean Yippee-ki-yay, motherf—kers. Umm ... line!"

rogue spear: urban operations

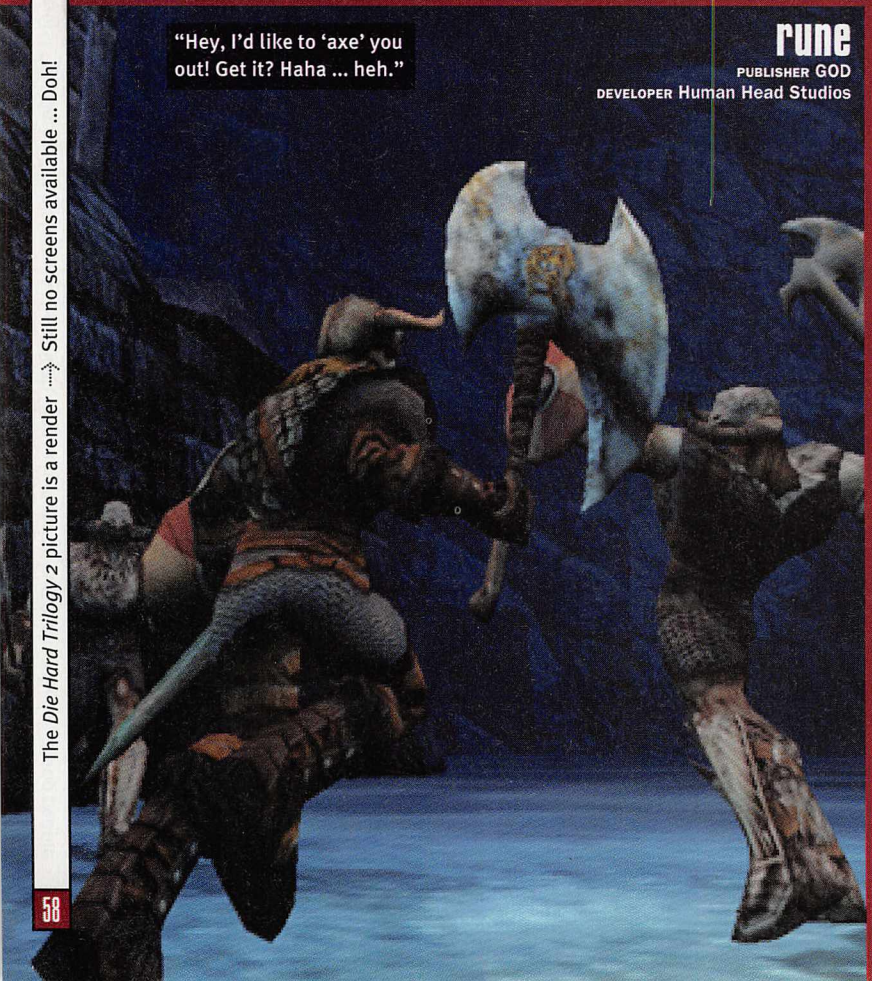
PUBLISHER Redstorm DEVELOPER Redstorm



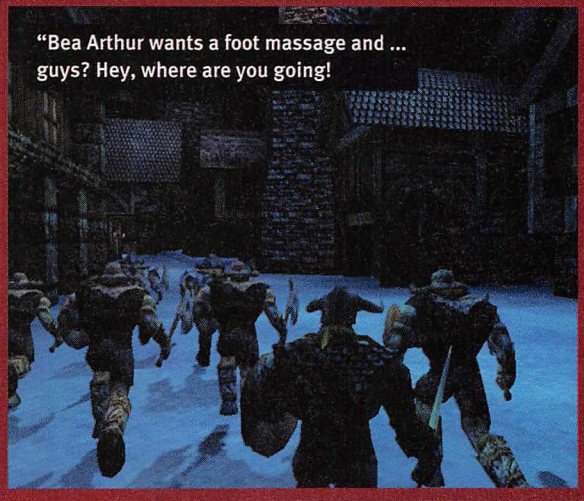
"Here kitty, kitty, kitty ...

rune

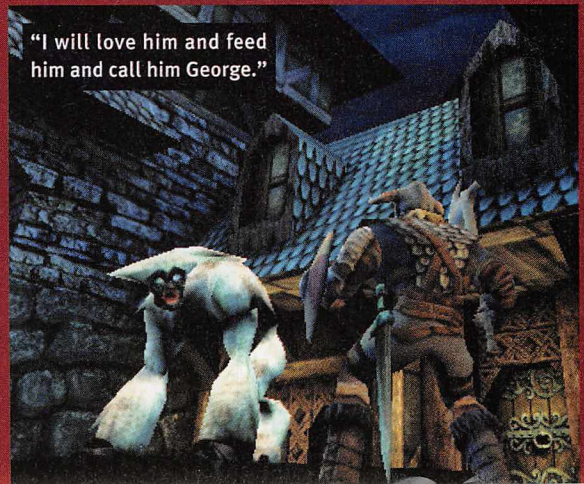
PUBLISHER GOD
DEVELOPER Human Head Studios



"Hey, I'd like to 'axe' you out! Get it? Haha ... heh."



"Bea Arthur wants a foot massage and ... guys? Hey, where are you going!



"I will love him and feed him and call him George."

www.DailyRadar.com

The *Die Hard Trilogy 2* picture is a render ⟶ Still no screens available ... Doh!

need for speed: porsche unleashed

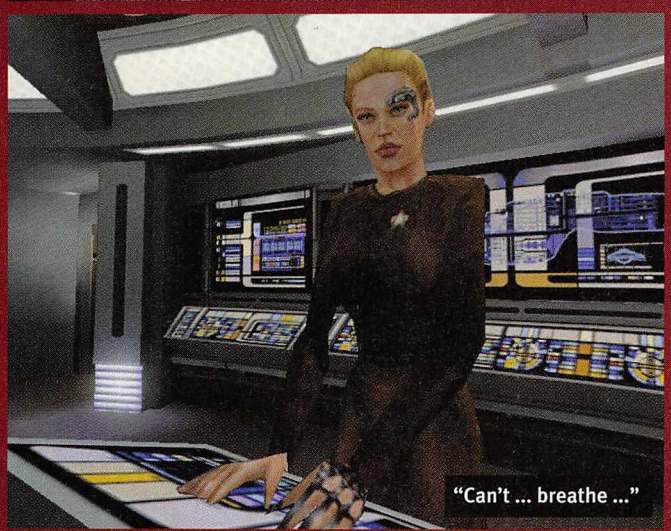
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts DEVELOPER EA Canada

"I love you, Michael."
"Shut up, KITT."

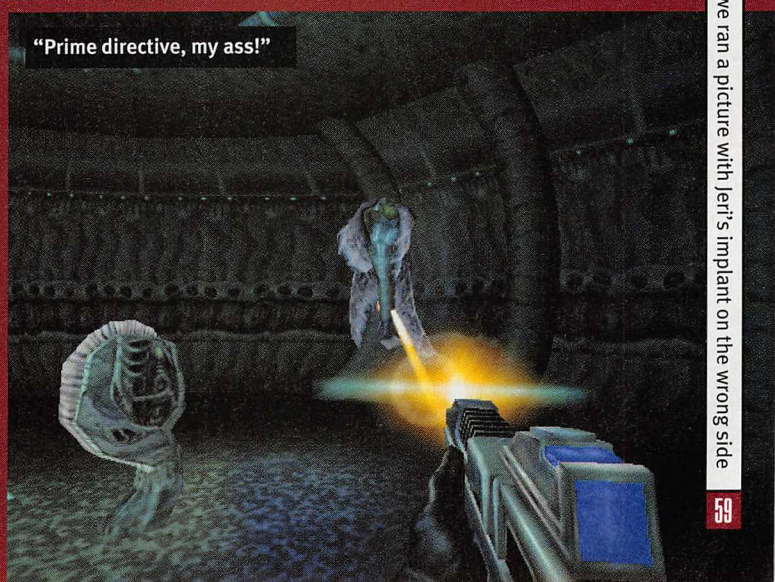
star trek voyager: elite force

PUBLISHER Activision DEVELOPER Raven

"Bob, can I borrow your chapstick?"



"Can't ... breathe ..."



"Prime directive, my ass!"

You own the night.

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

www.lglass.com

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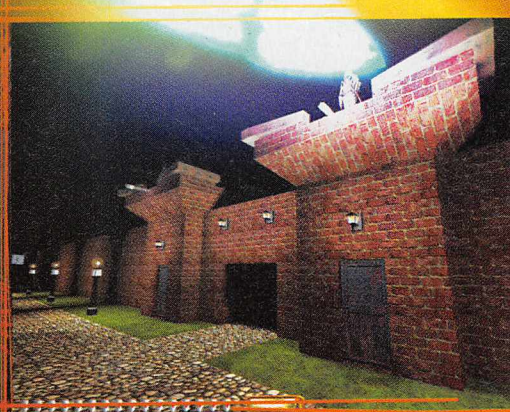


Everything else you have to steal.

All you have is your stealth, your cunning and the time between dusk and dawn. Luckily that is all you need because everything else is up for grabs – as long as you avoid wandering guards. Use the shadows as your cover. Treasure the silence of your footsteps. And enjoy a nice quiet evening in someone else's home.

- Enhanced Dark Engine allows for a more engaging stealth experience
- Advanced AI system creates a variety of human opponents to outwit
- Sophisticated new tools to improve your success as a master thief
- Realistic environmental weather effects like rain, fog, and snow

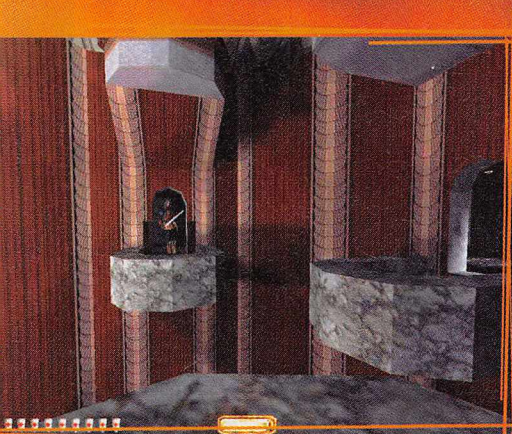
THIEF II

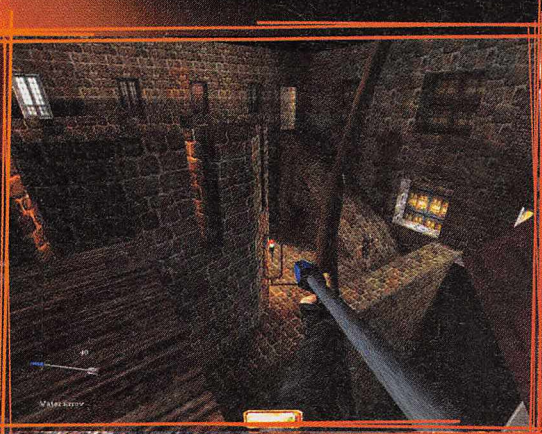
THE METAL AGE™

Steal the interactive demo at
www.eidos.com

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 25

EIDOS INTERACTIVE®





3 COM U.S. Robotics Internet Gaming Modem

PRICE ···› $139
WEBSITE ···› www.3com.com
BUNDLE ···› Full versions of *Heavy Gear II*, *Civilization: Call to Power* and one other Activision game (by mail)

So many peripherals get thrown at gamers these days that hardly one jaded eye blinked when we first heard about the new Internet Gaming Modem from 3COM. The concept sounds uncomfortably close to a fake ad **PCXL** ran a few issues back for "the gamer's power cord" — a spoof on "gaming" accessories whose connection to gaming is dubious, if not downright ridiculous. When it comes to 56K modems, a modem is a modem is a modem, right? And unlike hot new 3D cards, they're totally unsexy. In fact, we'd wager our measly paychecks that of all the components in your PC, the modem is the one you lust over the least.

Or so we thought until Valve began promising that their PowerPlay system (see TechPhiles March 2000) would give gamers LAN-quality performance from home on standard 56K modems. Since the 56Kbps limit for modems using standard phone lines was reached a few years ago (in reality, 53Kbps due to FCC regulations — lousy Feds!), there really haven't been any improvements in the technology except for the obligatory jump from ISA to PCI. (Whee.) But since few of us have the dough for high-speed DSL or cable modems, and PowerPlay still hasn't gone live (at least not by the time of this writing), a gaming modem might lower outrageously high pings (number of milliseconds to transfer a data packet) and reduce lag time.

Using a trick that'll be included in PowerPlay, the connection speed is counter-intuitively dropped from the allowed maximum (for us, 49Kbs) to an average of 44Kbs. Doing so makes the connection more stable and actually allows more data packets to be transferred because fewer are being dropped, thereby lowering your ping rate. Think of it this way: Articulate speakers are easier to understand than motormouths.

Does it work? We answer with a qualified "yes." Connections over Gamespy averaged a 10-15 ms drop in ping when compared to our old ISA U.S. Robotics 56K Faxmodem, but that's a limited improvement when pings are in the triple digits. So many factors can affect a ping rate — wiring, data traffic, your ISP — that pings are rarely consistent even to a set server. In fact, if your current modem is customizable enough to lower the connection speed and turn off hardware compression, it could be a "gaming" modem, too.

An icon sits in your system tray that lets you turn the Internet Gaming Modem's gaming mode on (for games, duh) or off (for web-browsing), which is not only easy to use, but keeps you from having to muck about in your modem properties every time you want to play a computer game.

Except for the included software, this is really just a standard issue, though highly priced, PCI Faxmodem lacking fax software. (Gamespy and MP3Spy is packed along with the game bundle, though.) If you're in need of a regular old internal analog modem and play games at home, then you won't go wrong with this one, but don't expect any miracles just yet.

+ PLUSES

+ Good bundle
+ Gaming mode activation easy
+ Box is a nice shape

— MINUSES

– Expensive
– Still too damn slow

RATING

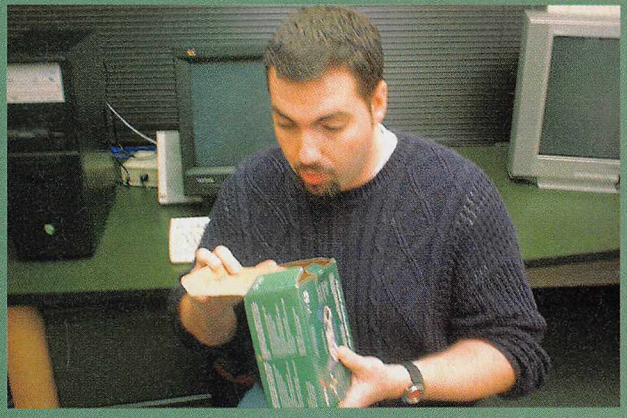
TOP 10 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR MODEM SEXIER

1. You, your modem, and a jar of chocolate body frosting. Rinse and repeat.
2. Buy it something slinky from "Frederick's Of Silicon Valley."
3. Replace circuit board with leather.
4. Tell friends they should "check out the ping on that baby. Woo-hoo!"
5. Play the "Theme to Shaft" whenever you start up your web browser.
6. Create a Windows startup .wav file announcing "Modem in da houuuuse!"
7. Rename it "Felicia."
8. Warn everyone in the room that your modem is about to connect and you can no longer guarantee their safety.
9. During the connection squeal, shout, "Yeah, you like that, don't you?"
10. Read the instructions in French.

Goofus and Gallant

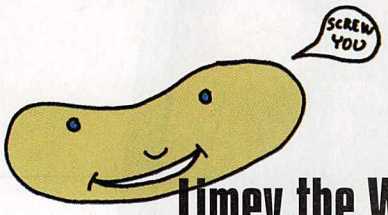
"How to Install a Gamepad"

In a time long ago, two characters taught children heartfelt messages in the pages of *Highlights For Children* magazine. Though their mag died, Goofus and Gallant have survived to teach heartfelt messages about computer hardware to a new generation of kids.



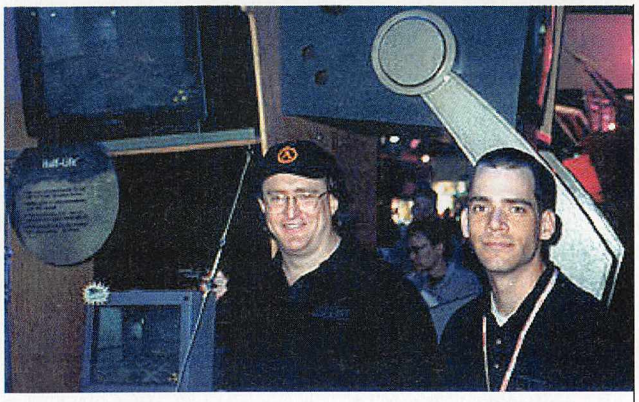
Gallant carefully opens the box and removes the gamepad, installation CD, and instructions.

Goofus carefully removes from his shirt the gamepad he just shoplifted when nobody was looking.



Limey the Wisecrackin' Lima Bean's Celebrity Interview

Q&A with Valve's Gabe Newell on Powerplay



Gabe Newell when he was a happy man ... but that was before the Limey interview.

Limey, **PCXL**'s least-despised cartoon mascot (so far), recently got Valve's Gabe Newell in the hot seat to discuss PowerPlay, the new standard set to revolutionize modem gaming. Did we mention that he's a wisecrackin' lima bean? [Editor's note – We apologize in advance for this. Limey's mommy didn't love him.]

Limey: What the hell is this PowerPlay crap?

Gabe Newell: The goal of PowerPlay is to make the Internet a better platform for entertainment. The problem is that in the past there were all of these pieces that affected the quality of playing on the Internet without anybody putting forth a coordinated plan to make it work well. By getting game developers, hardware manufacturers, and service providers to work together, we can design the necessary improvements.

Limey: Screw you! How will other game companies benefit from PowerPlay, asswipe?

GN: The hope is that by working on QOS (Quality of Service), the online gaming market will continue to grow at its current 100% annual rate rather than stalling out because the Internet isn't ready for prime time consumer entertainment. Could game companies charge more for PowerPlay games? Probably not. Could game companies sell more PowerPlay games to a wider audience? That's the hope.

Limey: Get bent, you tosser! Id's own John Carmack said "They couldn't give me enough specific technical details for me to endorse PowerPlay. I'm all for improvements in networking infrastructure, but at this point, there isn't anything actually there, just an intention to improve gaming." Yer not so peppy now, eh, smart guy?

Gabe Newell: Our initial response back was, "PowerPlay 1.0 was supposed to be something of a private experiment that becomes public as we track the results and migrate the positives into PowerPlay 2.0, which will be an open standard and something we all agree on, so let's get the right people in the room and get cracking on those specs." John's point to us was, "Hey, give me some concrete things to do as a programmer," and that point has been echoed in private by the other developers. John's vigorous and public encouragement to us to make PowerPlay technically open sooner is, in retrospect, entirely appropriate and inevitable.

Limey: So you got popped in the mush, happens to me all the time ... so who's gonna profit?

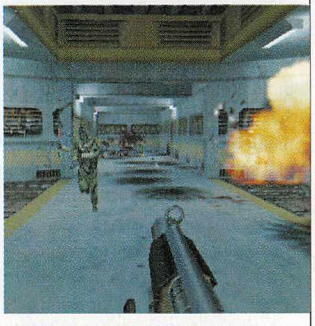
Gabe Newell: You mean, "This sounds too good to be true, so it must be a scam, right?" It helps to take a step back to understand why it makes business sense for the participants. There's also a separate question: "As a gamer, am I going to be paying more to somebody for this?"

For ISPs it gives them the opportunity to have a differentiable service offering, which they desperately want, and potentially helps them reduce churn on their service. If I'm an ISP and I'd like to give gamers value above and beyond what the free ISPs are offering, PowerPlay is a tool to do that.

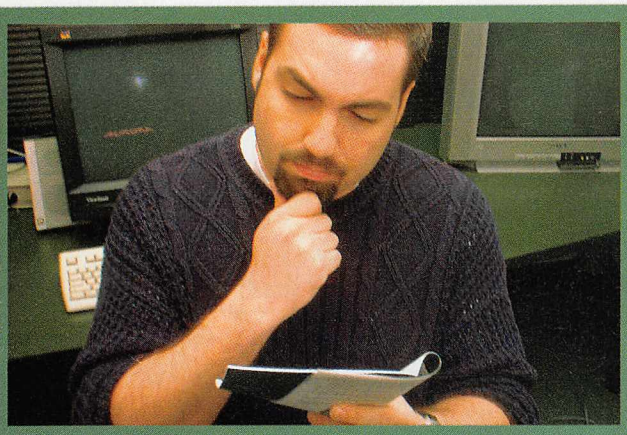
Now some ISPs will probably offer a premium service and charge extra for it, and some ISPs will make it a base part of their network. We feel that's really up to the ISP to decide.

Game developers will make more money because more people will buy and play online games, and to a lesser extent fewer product returns from disgruntled users and fewer support calls from customers who are trying to figure out how to make their Internet game experience not suck.

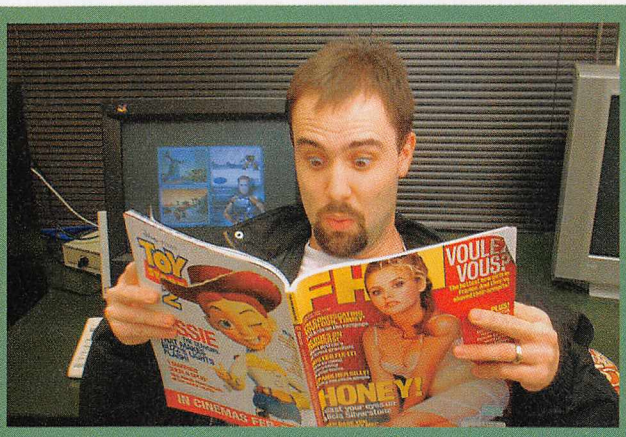
So how do I as a gamer have to pay for this? That's up to your ISP. This isn't a pay-to-play scheme or "Return of the Living DWANGO" – it is about a group of companies trying to make the Internet a better platform for entertainment.



***Half-Life* with half-ping, is it actually possible?**



Gallant meticulously reads the instruction manual, gaining insight into the intricacies of gaming peripherals.

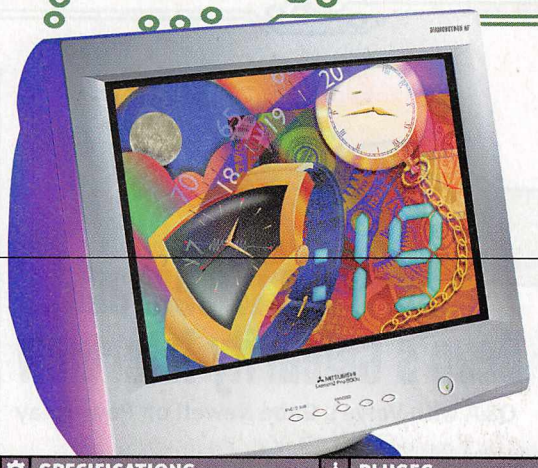


Goofus meticulously reads a "borrowed" girlie magazine, gaining insight into the intricacies of airbrushing.

People from Britain used to be called "Limeys" because they loved lima beans – we think

19-Inch Monitors

Size really does matter



Let's face it, if you're a **PCXL** reader, you probably have at least a 17-inch monitor at home (or you really, really should) . But time has passed, friend, and the prices of 19-inch monitors have dropped. We all want to stare at 19 inches of hot lovin' don't we? We decided to slap two of the latest on a table and give them a nice long stare.

The ViewSonic PF795 is a flat screen, 19 inch monitor available for less than $650. Image quality is crisp and the color is very rich and bright, with contrasts showing up with contrasting colors clearly differentiated. I noticed some bending and bowing on the sides of the screen, but these geometry problems were easily and completely corrected through the detailed onscreen controls that also allowed me to refocus and adjust color purity in individual corners. The only flaw I noticed was a very slight, almost unnoticeable, lack of focus in the corners of the screen.

The Mitsubishi DiamondPro 900u, a similarly flat screen, was virtually identical to the PF795 in picture quality and selection of on-screen controls. One of only two major differences is the existence of a self-powered USB hub with three downstream ports, and two upstream ports — so you can share it between two computers. The other difference is the slightly lower maximum resolution and refresh rates. If you went mad and decided to run something at 1600X1200, you would get a barely sufficient 75Hz from the Mitsubishi, whereas the PF795 delivers a sweet 87Hz picture.

Both ViewSonic and Mitsubishi use variants of Sony's TriniTron technology, which uses small wires to hold the aperture grille steady.

Visually, either one of these monitors would do a gamer proud since they will both run at 1280X1024 at a minimum of 85Hz, so the only other deciding factor would be whether or not you need a USB hub.

SPECIFICATIONS

MITSUBISHI DIAMONDPRO 900U

www.mitsubishi-display.com

Dot Pitch ···› **.25** (.27 on corners)
Viewable Area ···› **18"**
Weight ···› **54 lbs**
Max Res. ···› **1600 x 1200 @ 75hz**
Screen type ···› **Aperture grill**

PLUSES

+ Sweet USB hub built-in
+ On-screen controls-a-go-go

MINUSES

– On-screen interface confusing
– Slow refresh rates

RATING 9

THE POWER LIST

Consider this the official cool/not cool list in **PCXL**. If you don't have something on the cool list, then maybe you should:

GET:

- PIII-750
- GeForce 256 DDR 3D card
- Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer (sweet!)
- SoundBlaster Live!/Vortex2 sound card (it's a tie)
- Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad (still the best)
- Onstream 30 GB digital drive (for back-ups, porn, whatever)
- Hunsaker Battle Chair (for back support, porn, whatever)
- Microsoft Force Feedback Joystick
- Cheese sticks dipped in cheese, then fried and dipped in cheese again ... mmmmm
- Back issues of **PCXL**

AVOID:

- Leopard-skin wrist supporters
- Lame products called "The Gamer's _____" that don't have anything to do with games
- The Fragmaster
- Hand-knit Mouse Cozies

SPECIFICATIONS

VIEWSONIC PF795

www.viewsonic.com

Dot Pitch ···› **.25** (.27 on corners)
Viewable Area ···› **18"**
Weight ···› **55 lbs**
Max Res. ···› **1800 x 1440 @ 70hz**
Screen type ···› **Aperture grill**

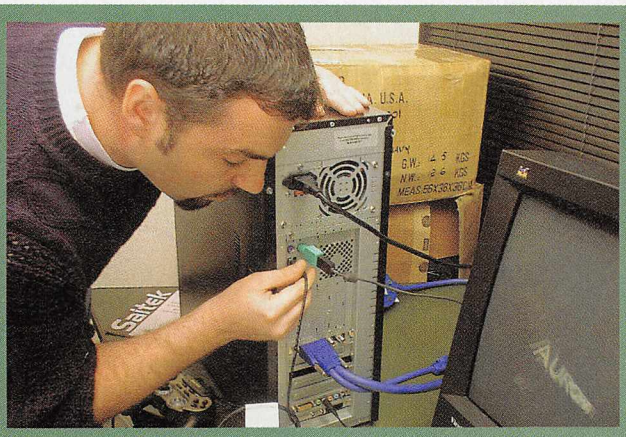
PLUSES

+ Excellent range of resolutions
+ Easy to use on-screen controls

MINUSES

– Very slight loss of focus in corners
– Doesn't come in clear, or tangerine

RATING 9



Gallant attaches the gamepad to the correct PC port.

Goofus drinks a gallon of Port wine and accidentally steps on gamepad, smashing it.

Gravis Xterminator Dual Control Joystick

PRICE ···› $59.95
WEBSITE ···› www.gravis.com
BUNDLE ···› Full version of *Tribes*

For those used to the mouse/keyboard setup for first-person shooters, there is no substitute. But for many, mashing your fingers together on a keyboard, not designed for gaming in the first place, just feels awkward and the adjustment period can seem like an enternity. One **PCXL** editor even used a gamepad until we beat some sense into him. However, there is something for those of you still not willing to contort your fingers (or if you are too much of a sissy to use mouse/keyboard like a "real man"). The Xterminator Dual Control Joystick might fill your need as an all-in-one peripheral capable of handling both shooters and flight sims with ease.

Though the footprint is hefty, the placement of the joystick on the right and an ergonomic proportional D-pad and five button/throttle configuration on the left (hence the "dual" in dual control) is surprisingly easy to control. Using the Gravis Xperience set-up software, there are 49 programmable functions for entering custom cheats at the push of a button or anything else you'd normally do with the keyboard. The joystick is a run-of-the-mill five-button and hat switch combo, but it's good enough to have been sold as a separate unit.

If you're in the market for the Swiss Army knife of peripherals (and need a copy of *Tribes*), the Xterminator will serve your needs quite admirably.

PLUSES
+ Big, sturdy and customizable
+ Dual USB and game port connections

MINUSES
– Proportional D-pad
– Keyboard/Mouse still rules

RATING 8

Saitek P750 Gamepad

PRICE ···› $29.95
WEBSITE ···› www.saitek.com
BUNDLE ···› None

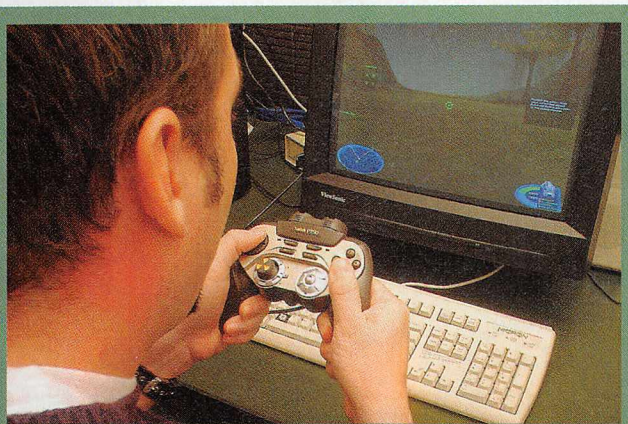
Just like the Microsoft Sidewinder gamepad inspired a slew of clones, so has the original PlayStation controller. The new USB/game port-compatible Saitek P750 uses a similar design to the intuitive console standard, but is bulked up with all those extras that set Saitek peripherals apart from others in the biz. Case in point — this pad has both digital and analog controllers, with the stubby analog stick having an extra lock function, allowing you to move only horizontally or vertically (great for racing games) if the need arises. An unfortunate coincidence, the orange radioactivity warning design on the stick looks like a Duke Nukem promotional tie-in.

It's also one of the few pads with a throttle wheel, logically centered at the bottom and easily controlled by your thumb. The usual diamond-pattern layout of four buttons on the face and four shoulder buttons round out the package. Saitek's Gaming Extension Software is also included to customize buttons for any game that supports a pad, with game presets available for download from their website. Our only real complaint is that the D-pad is a little too flat and uncomfortable for our tastes, but since thumb-bruising fighting games are few and far between on the PC, you may not even notice. An excellent pad, but the Sidewinder remains the gaming pad of choice around the office.

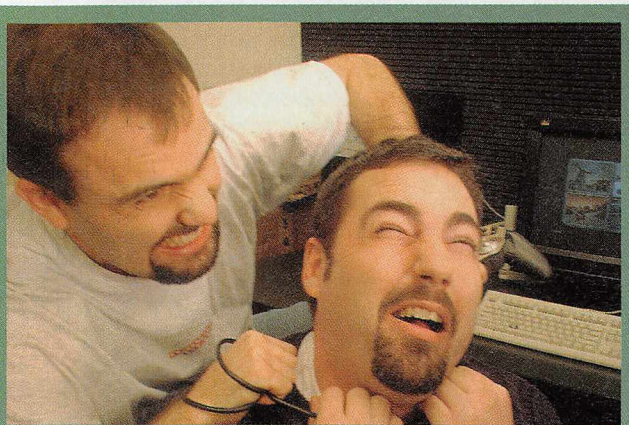
PLUSES
+ Cool locking ability
+ Familiar, inuitive design
+ Not made by "the man"

MINUSES
– D-pad not comfy enough
– Name lacks creativity

RATING 8



Gallant installs the drivers and gets ready to play.



Goofus uses cord to choke Gallant. He's ready to play, too!

Dan Egger is pissed that he was snubbed by the Oscars for his touching portrayal of Goofus

Don't just change the way you look at Real-Time Strategy.

The first all-terrain, three-dimensional real-time strategy game has landed on American shores. After taking Europe by storm, Earth 2150 is ready to change RTS forever. More than eye candy, its revolutionary 3D engine takes the genre in a new direction. And what's most impressive is that you don't have to take our word for it:

"Best Strategy Game of the Year."
- Power Play 11/99

"Uses the 3D environment to its fullest strategic value."
www.ign.com

"Sets a new genre standard for realtime stategy."
- PC Action 11/99

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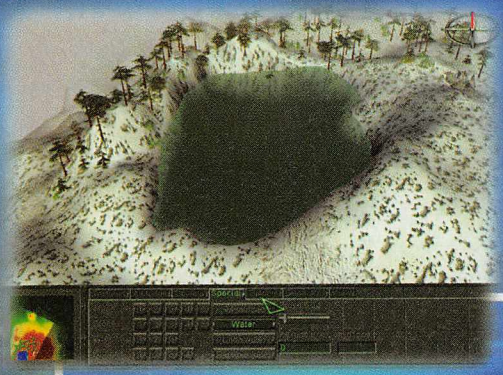
Change the way you play it.

>Alter the 3D landscape to your advantage with the first true terrain deformation in RTS.

>Build weaponry onto buildings, turning ordinarily static structures into weapons of war.

>Adjust your tactical decisions based on day and night cycles and realistic weather patterns.



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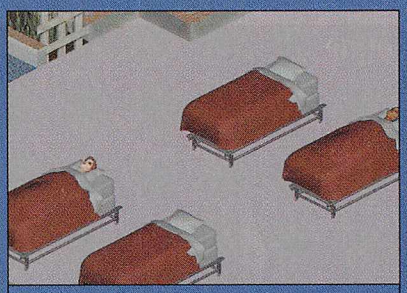


The hard-working **PCXL** staffers after lunch.

It's been a "meat and potatoes" month in the gaming industry — lots of average games, a few good ones, and a big load of crap. We could barely push ourselves away from the table and stick our fingers down our collective throats after gorging ourselves silly on *The Sims* tastiness. And *Nox* was a chocolate-covered dessert that was mm, mm, good. On the other hand, if all we had to eat was *South Park Rally*, we'd rather live on cous cous or pull a Ghandi. But mostly what we pushed down our gaming guts was too much fast food. We walked away bloated and our stomachs felt funny, but at least we slept under our desks after lunch. Then after a good nap and a long trip to the boys' room, we'd start writing reviews, beat on the new guy with lead pipes, and drink beer. Just another month at **PCXL**.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

An All-You-Can-Eat steak dinner with lobster, king crab, and booze. And she pays.	10
The perfect meal, the perfect date, but you forgot the condoms. You can't have it all.	9
You're with friends and the food is tasty, but a bit overpriced. But it's ok — you're having a good time.	8
Movie and dinner. You walk away thinking you'd give it another try.	7
Not the worst, not the best. Going to bed early to watch football in the morning.	6
Mall food or mall cineplex. This game or sleeping. Tough choice.	5
The picture on the menu looked great, but that "thing" they just served you doesn't even resemble it.	4
You spend the money, think you're in love, but later discover she gave you the number to Griffin Pest Control.	3
Her dad shows you his gun collection, she tells you about all the people he has killed.	2
Like a blind date with Linda Tripp — and you'll wish you really were blind.	1

KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or 10 from our rigorous scoring system warrants this nifty logo. If you see the **PC ACCELERATOR** Killer Game stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.

SUICIDE

If we're going to create a stamp for the truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforgivable shit as well. It takes an abominable score of 1 or 2 to qualify for the noose around the neck. Heed our warning: Stay away from these games at all costs.

BAD SUSHI:

Much like bad games, raw fish that sits out too long quickly turns into a health hazard, but that doesn't stop bitter sushi chefs from trying to push it onto unsuspecting customers. And so do game designers ply subpar games on an unsuspecting public. Thank sweet Jesus, **PCXL** is here, and we do all the puking for you. Consider these games to be two-day old tuna — just plain wrong.

SOUTH PARK RALLY
Publisher ···› Acclaim
Developer ···› Tantalus
Rating ···› 3
How bad is it? So far, it's the worst of 2000, surpassed only by *Skydive! Pro 2000 Edition*. How the hell did they screw up a *Mario Kart* conversion?

MORTYR
Publishe r···› Interplay
Developer ···› Mirage Media
Rating ···› 5
How bad is it? In an alternate timeline, killing Nazis somehow becomes less than enjoyable — how is that possible?

DIPLOMACY
Publisher ···› Hasbro
Developer ···› Meyer/Glass Interactive
Rating ···› 3
How bad is it? We refuse to be diplomatic in stating our opinion of this game. It's been a month and it still sucks

NEW YORK STRIP:

Nothing tastes like a filet mignon, New York strip, or a veal chop. Yes friends, the editors of **PCXL** eat meat. Don't let all that hubbub about heart disease slow you down, it's perfectly normal to die at the age of 35 from a heart attack. Like some skin-job in *Blade Runner*, we live life to the fullest, including all the fatty meat parts. This month's selections include some tasty cutlets.

THE SIMS
Publisher ···› EA
Developer ···› Maxis
Rating ···› 9
How good is it? This game is already blowing away sale records for Maxis. It's perfect for the mass market as well as real-life control freaks.

NOX:
Publisher ···› EA
Developer ···› Westwood
Rating ···› 8
How good is it? A *Quake*-like RPG for multiplayer and a decent single-player? Yes, there is life beyond *Diablo*.

TREAD MARKS
Publisher ···› Longbow Digital Arts
Developer ···› Longbow Digital Arts
Rating ···› 7
How good is it? Good tank games recall the gladiator battles of our youth — or at least the ones we watched longingly from afar.

ACCELE-RATED ››

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: How it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerates, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card. And if the game is not accelerated at all, we fill it with a joke or a bunch of technobabble you probably won't understand. Either way, you should read it.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the setup of your system)

ACCELE-RATED

In this little box you'll find out all you need to know about the 3D-ness of the game. We'll talk about different cards, problems, and specifics to help you decide if the game is right for your system. Aren't we nice?

RATINGS ››

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in, we won't hold back and allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

GRAPHICS Rendering quality, FPS, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

SOUND Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

DEPTH How often and how long you find yourself playing a game are good indicators of its quality.

DESIGN A great game is one that sucks you in and doesn't let go until it is finished. We call that good design.

PLUSES

\+ Here we list various good points about the game in question — in some cases finding three good points is harder than you'd think

MINUSES

– Here is where we point out the games flaws — after all, even the best games aren't perfect

RATING

PUBLISHER ···› Electronic Arts	DEVELOPER ···› Maxis
REQUIRED ···› P233, 32MB RAM, 260MB hard drive, 2MB video card	IDEAL ···› PII 300, 128MB RAM, 4MB video card, way too much spare time

ACCELE-RATED

You don't need any fancy-schmancy 3D card. Having at least a 4MB video card does help. Most important to making this game move are RAM and processor. On a P233 with 32MB RAM it ran like molasses.

The Sims

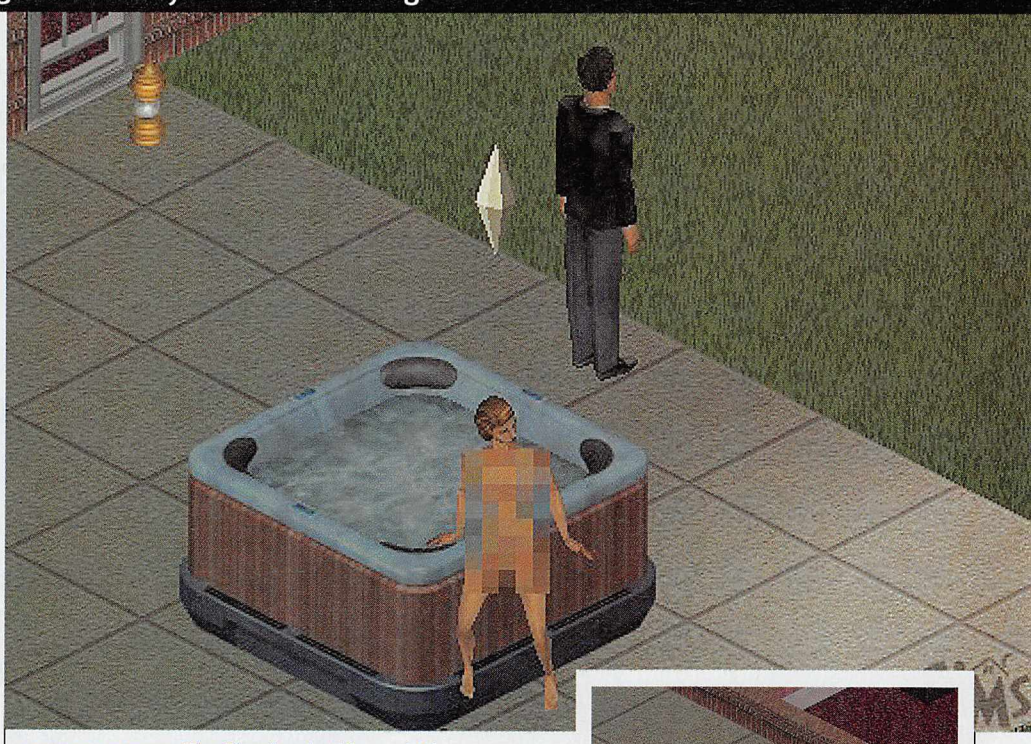
It's kinda like passing out whiskey at an AA meeting

It'd be easy for me to sit here and heap praise on the makers of *The Sims*, but I just won't do it. In fact, I'm going to tell you exactly why the folks at Maxis should be ashamed of themselves, and maybe even locked up.

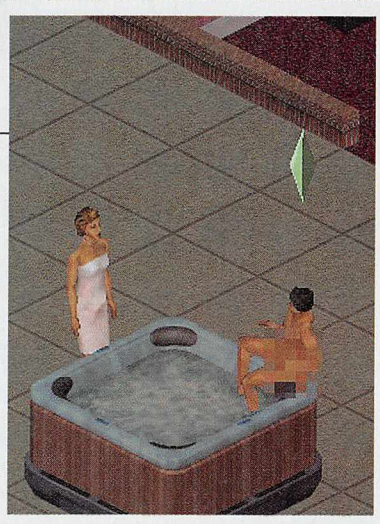
Don't they realize that gamers already waste all of their free time and that Joe Public is condemning gaming as an anti-social experience? So what do the smarty-pants at Maxis do? They release the single most addictive game I've ever played. It's like your very own box of virtual crack. If you've bought the game and haven't gotten around to installing it, then do yourself, your family, and your country a monumental favor by returning *The Sims* immediately, get on with your own productive life and promise never to speak of this evil again. Take it from someone who has endured late nights, sweaty palms, and bizarre hallucinations (and I've played *The Sims* too), this is a game of virtual life that can ruin your real life.

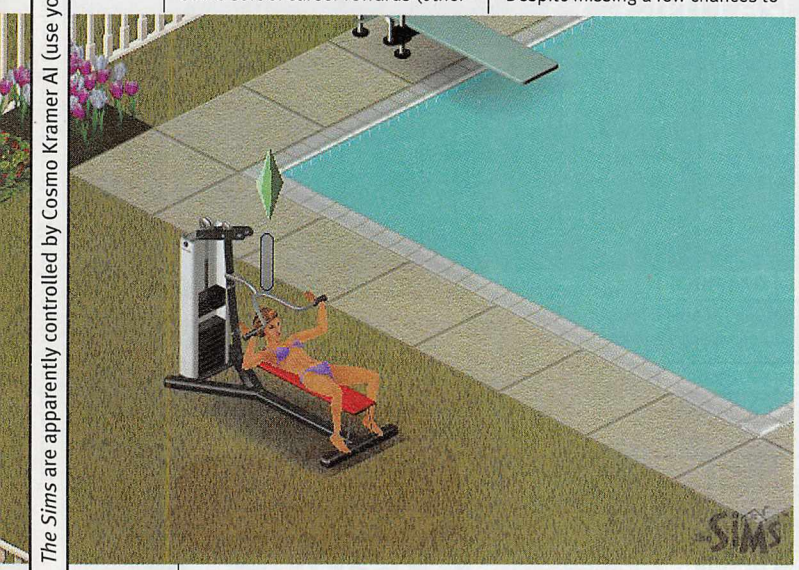
The scariest thing about *The Sims* is that it could have been much worse. It could've offered more variety in personality traits, more options in interaction, and some sort of career rewards (other than promotions and salary increases, which are all pretty similar no matter which track you decide to take). That would've turned the crack into smack. Despite missing a few chances to make this game even more diabolical, *The Sims* still has plenty of evil packed into its people simulator.

For those of you who aren't familiar with *The Sims*, it's an up close and personal simulation of a neighborhood, family, house, and individual people. You control everything from your created Sims' urination and playtime activities to affairs of the heart.



For most gamers, *The Sims* is a lot like real life — you never get to see the good stuff.

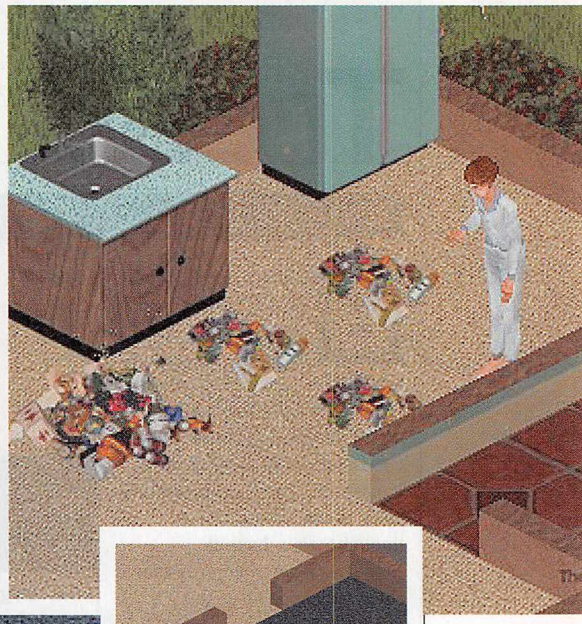


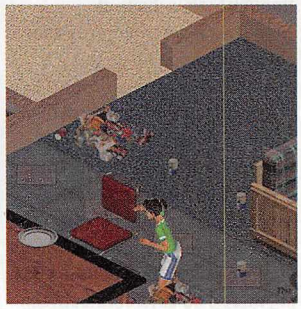


As Gertrude Sim lifts weights, and Neal Sim practices Chopin, guess we know who wears the pants in this family.

The Sims are apparently controlled by Cosmo Kramer AI (use your bathroom, shower, fridge, etc.)

www.DailyRadar.com





Tickling Sims wearing chaps isn't a good idea. And doesn't that chick have anything better to think about than furniture?

The control scheme and interface are ridiculously simple; meaning that even the mysterious "mass market" can easily become a victim to this game's torture. Succeeding in *The Sims* is very similar to succeeding in real life — kiss ass, chase ass, and hopefully become the one whose ass is kissed.

There are a total of 10 career tracks, ranging from the life of crime to being one of *SimCity*'s finest. You can also be an entertainer or a politician if you develop the sufficient sleaze skills. In order to climb the career ladder you must engage socially with other Sims, increase skills, and keep your little creation clean, happy, healthy, and emotionally stable.

In my experience with *The Sims*, trying to keep pace in the rat-race that is life (make more money, buy more shit, get more friends, repeat ad nauseum), just didn't ruin my real life quite enough. Instead I became a Sims deviant, the kind of "reck-loose" that tested the very flexibility of *The Sims* world. To my shock and horror, it let me do it all. Crackhouses, serial killers, dysfunctional families, starving children, adultery, marriage, babies, violence, and everything else a sick mind can devise is possible — if you have the will, and the time (oh, the time).

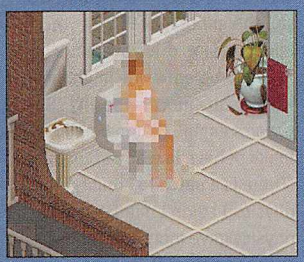
From the beginning, you move a Sim or Sim family (you can control up to eight Sims at a time) into a pre-existing house, or create your own pad of destruction, love, or whoring with the standard $20,000 starting money. Trying to take that one Sim or family through their life would be enough to make this game unforgivably bad for the human spirit, but the cheeky bastards (thanks to Rob Smith for the quirky Britishism) allow you to switch families anytime you like. Eventually you can create a frickin' neighborhood full of neurotic Sims who constantly need your time.

I am weak; I fell victim to the allure of enveloping gameplay, unending variety, and ridiculous micromanaging. Here's hoping you can be a better man and resist the temptation to be thoroughly entertained, annoyed, and amused by this tantalizing world of heathen worship. Good luck.

— **MIKE SALMON** *has six successful families in* **The Sims** *and one really pissed wife in The Hood*

SIMS DO THE STRANGEST THINGS

The Sims manages to really capture all the annoyances, excitement, sadness, and pressures of life, but there are plenty of actions a Sim guy can peform which he could never get away with in our neighborhood



SIM ACTION: Walk into your bathroom and take a dump without invitation
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Will certainly be the last time we ever invited him over to our house. That's gross

SIM ACTION: Tickling
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Tickling isn't funny, it hurts. Plus, it's just weird!

SIM ACTION: Going into tub naked with girl
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Shrinkage

SIM ACTION: Eating out of your fridge
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Paying half the rent

SIM ACTION: Enclosing you in a room until you starve to death
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Eventually he'd be caught, arrested, then found insane, so he could spend the rest of his life in a comfortable institution

SIM ACTION: Kissing your wife — with you in the room
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Kissing the floor — with his face

SIM ACTION: Giving back rubs to your Sim buddy
REAL CONSEQUENCE: Buddy either rubs back (if you know what we mean) or breaks back

Neal and Bob Funboy are "very" close.

GRAPHICS Nice detail on items, houses, and some of the models. But this could have been much better.

SOUND Annoying music mixed with Charlie Brown teacherspeak = mute button or certain insanity.

DEPTH A lot more involving than most of your real lives — play at your own risk.

DESIGN More rewards for careers, more variety in interaction, and sex would have been nice.

PLUSES
+ Lesbian kisses
+ Total freedom
+ Money
+ Electronics

MINUSES
– Gay kisses
– Cleaning up
– "Quality time"
– Work and sleep

RATING 9

PUBLISHER ···› Longbow Digital Arts	DEVELOPER ···› Longbow Digital Arts
REQUIRED ···› P200, 32MB RAM, 200MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM	IDEAL ···› PII 333, 128MB RAM, 400MB hard drive, OpenGL-compatible 3D card

Tread Marks

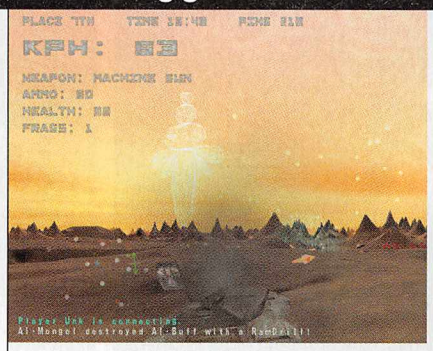
It's a tank game ... no, it's a racing game ... and a shooter ... and ... oh, screw it

ACCELE-RATED

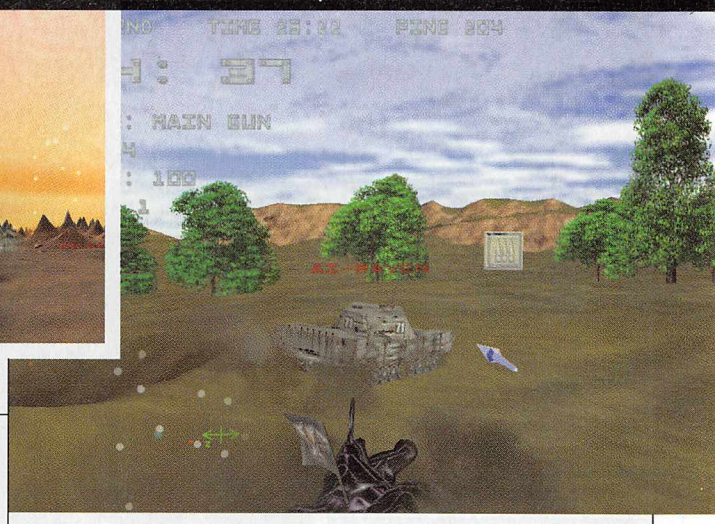
There is a pixelicious software mode. This first release is jumpy on Voodoo boards (a patch is supposed to address this), but it'll work on any OpenGL card. S3TC compression support is included for Viper II owners.

Believe it or not, for a simple old-school combat tank game, *Tread Marks* is a surprisingly fun nail-biter, combining Baja-style racing and *Quake*-like deathmatch action. Longbow Digital Arts developed and published this game themselves, and in Id's pioneering spirit, is distributing it solely through their website at www.treadmarks.com. (You can check out the demo on this month's CD.) It's easy to see a screenshot of this game and think "oh, this is just like *Recoil*" or some other generic action game involving tanks. Sure, there are similarities, like say ... oh, the fact that you're in a tank and you shoot at other tanks ... but that's like saying there's no difference between *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*, and we don't really want to start that argument again, do we?

One of the best decisions Longbow made was to drop any pretense of a cheesy storyline — it's straight out racing and fragging, even in single-player mode. There's a whopping 52 (yep, *52*) available tracks — 33 racing/deathmatch and 19 straight deathmatch — covering such diverse environments as the idyllic Deer Hunter forest to the fiery (albeit obligatory) Volcano map and any other format you can imagine, on or off God's green Earth.



Thresh grew until all deathmatches revolved around him.



Batman was sloppy drunk when he crashed the Veteran's parade ...

Almost as impressive are the 20 different tanks from which to choose, ranging from "conventional" (if that's the right word in this game) steel tanks to super-neato shimmering liquid metal ones. And since we're playing the numbers game, add in 23 weapons like flame throwers, missiles, diamond-tip ram drills, the nuke, and *Tread Marks*'s BFG, the big bad Evil Incarnate gun, and you've got an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach that actually works. (Hear that, *South Park Rally*?)

In this game, you can start an instant match on any map or work your way up the to the #1 spot in ladder races against CPU opponents. Racing maps feature rally-style play — an arrow guides you to checkpoints, each containing a weapon, ammo, or repair kit, and your job is to win the circuit and knock anyone who gets in your way out of commission.

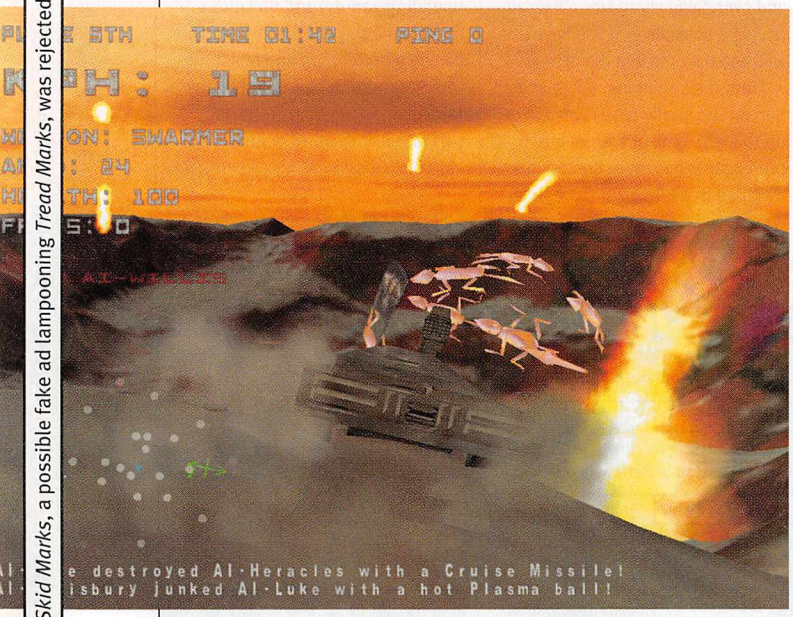
Deathmatch is actually what you think — most frags wins. There's even a turret view mode letting you move forward, but swivel your gun around to take down tailgaters. Multiplayer *Tread Marks* games are easy to find and set up, since, besides the requisite LAN support, a simple Internet game finder (á la *Quake III*) is included.

Terrain graphics are uniformly good, if not incredibly detailed. The land on which you play changes, depending on your actions, so a 120mm shell fired at your neighbor leaves a pit you might have to drive over later.

One problem some might have with *Tread Marks* is the ah ... liberal physics engine that makes your tanks behave like dune buggies. (There is a patch to "realify" the physics.) I didn't mind, since looser physics gave more variations in tank behaviors. Better yet, users can modify environments, tanks, sounds, and graphics, with mods (eventually) being available for download on the website.

I was surprised as hell that I sorta liked this game.

— **CHUCK OSBORN** *leaves his own marks wherever he goes*



Joe Versus The Volcano **would've been so much better if Tom Hanks had been replaced with a tank.**

GRAPHICS Terrain graphics are only functional, but tanks and weapon effects are pretty damn pretty.

SOUND Decent selection of 11 tunes, but voiceovers announcing nukes become old real fast.

DEPTH Not much, but by simply ballooning the pure number of maps, tanks, and weapons, fakes it admirably.

DESIGN Made for quick playing and mods-for-dummies support. Ain't nothin' wrong with dat.

PLUSES

+ Tons of maps and weapons
+ *Quake III* with tanks
+ Mod-friendly
+ Functional terrain graphics

MINUSES

– Unrealistic physics
– Web-only purchase
– Voodoo support needs patching
– Only slightly better than average

RATING 7

www.DailyRadar.com

Skid Marks, a possible fake ad lampooning *Tread Marks*, was rejected for grossing out several staffers

PUBLISHER ···› Red Storm Entertainment	DEVELOPER ···› Red Storm Entertainment
REQUIRED ···› P133, 32MB RAM, 200MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM drive, 2MB graphics card	IDEAL ···› A world where violence doesn't exist and all women look like Laetitia Casta

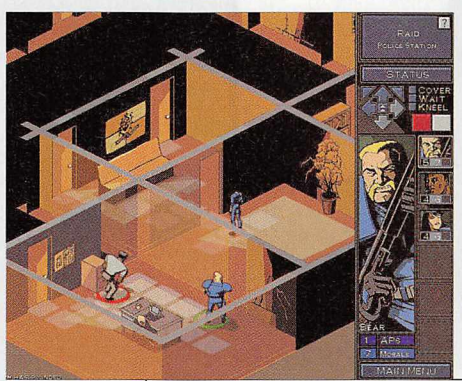
Shadow Watch

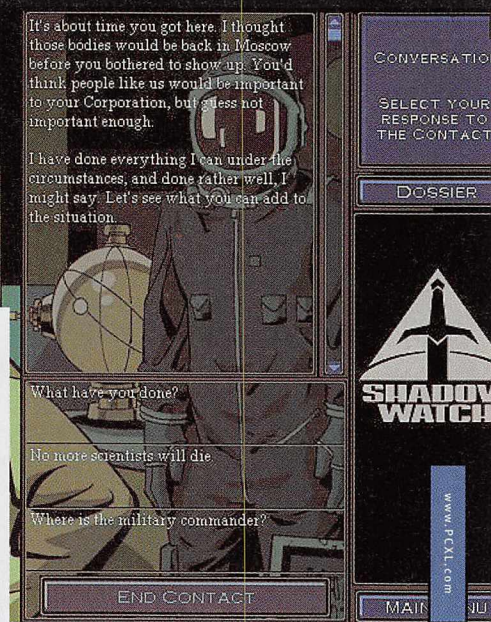
X-COM Lite — very lite

Much like Hollywood filmmakers who demand that every movie be bigger than the last, ("In this film, the sun explodes during the opening credits!") game makers are often trapped in a similar "more polygons, more colored lighting" mindset. So when Red Storm filled its turn-based strategy game *Shadow Watch* with comic book style graphics, I was intrigued. Artistically at least, the gamble paid off. Unfortunately, it goes rapidly downhill from there.

It seems that International Space Station is imperiled by political and ethnic tensions within some of the countries that are helping to construct it. You play an employee of a multinational corporation who leads a team of six experts investigating the problem and safeguarding the site. To do this, you'll travel through randomized campaigns in Rio, Russia, and Hong Kong.

While the graphics creates stylish scenes, storyline, and combat, the lack of contrast occasionally makes doorways difficult to see during tactical battles. Squad-level combat is similar in spirit, but nowhere near the quality of the old *X-COM* games. Characters have no inventory and consistently carry the same weapons and armor, removing the fun of uncovering new technology and weapons. In combat there are no hit points, only three paltry levels of damage — bruised, damaged, and dead. With no indication of how close my characters are to death and no knowledge of how much damage enemies' weapons can cause, how am I to decide whether I can risk my character on one more desperate move or if it's time to retreat?





Professor Barininova: Scientist, genius, and all-around hottie.

Gameplay is also impossibly slow because there are only four basic kinds of actions — a one step walk, a two step run, kneeling, and covering. With only two movement options and considerable pausing between moves, it can take forever to run down a short corridor. The game desperately needs an option similar to *Jagged Alliance 2* that allows you to move greater distances when there's no danger and returns play to turn-based mode when an enemy comes in range.

The campaign mode takes you through three different cities in random order. In each of these cities, there are three factions — one hostile, one neutral, and one friendly. A question and answer session determines the territories' different attitudes. The pattern of questions and the skills you select for each character also determines what types of missions (out of eight) you'll encounter, as well as who and where you'll be fighting. Major kudos for randomization — a swift kick in the ass for not making this game worth replaying.

Shadow Watch might be considered an introduction to the basic principles of turn-based squad level combat. However, experienced armchair strategists will quickly become bored. Based on gameplay alone, *Shadow Watch* merits a score of four, but Red Storm's bold decision to go for an artistic effect with the graphics is worth an extra point. It's the kind of risk-taking that should be encouraged. I just wish it had paid off with a better game.

— **ALLEN RAUSCH** *is standing in the shadows behind you*

"I am not the Asian chick from 'Ally McBeal,' dammit!"

ACCELE-RATED

No 3D acceleration, it's all flat, 2D graphics. So ... if you're still reading this ... here's a question. What's the difference between a woman and a computer? Most women won't accept a 3 1/2" floppy.

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

When we think of Russia we mostly think of damn Commies, but upon further review ,our cold-weathered nemesis has actually brought some great things to the world

VODKA
The finest use for a potato in the world

THE MOB
New movie bad guys now that Gotti's tucked away in prison

BALLET
Coast for a year with your girlfriend by agreeing to see them

BEARS
Who doesn't like dancing bears?

KOURNIKOVA
This ball-busting diva could heat up a cold day in St. Petersburg!

GRAPHICS A bold artistic choice that won't be to everyone's taste. I liked it, though.

SOUND Weak and generic. More voices and decent music could have made a huge difference.

DEPTH Little strategic depth, few choices during missions. Randomized campaigns give it some replayability.

DESIGN I kept getting the feeling that this was the demo for a good game to be released later ...

PLUSES

+ Imaginative graphics
+ Interesting premise
+ African-American cast as team leader

MINUSES

– Infuriatingly slow
– No depth to speak of
– Repetitive and annoying music
– Gets old and boring fast

RATING 5.0

Some African tribes believe that the shadow is a person's soul and can be destroyed by a flashbulb

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ALIENWARE

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PUBLISHER ···› Square EA	DEVELOPER ···› SquareSoft
REQUIRED ···› P200, 32MB RAM, 8MB 3D graphics card, 8X CD-ROM	IDEAL ···› PII 266, 64MB RAM, 16MB 3D graphics card

Final Fantasy VIII

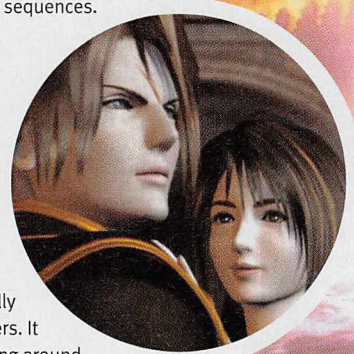
ACCELE-RATED

We got great looking, over-the-top spell effects on all graphics cards tested. The rounded, 3D characters also look superb, particularly on a GeForce or G400, which are most suitable for the D3D support.

ACK! There's a PlayStation in my PC!

SquareSoft's eighth installment in their groupie-obsessed *Final Fantasy* series, released last year on the PlayStation, surprised no one by becoming one of the biggest sellers of 1999. Even as bug-riddled and non-PC-centric as *FFVII* was, a port of this version was inevitable.

For those not in the know, console RPGs are traditional adventure games with character building stats, set characters, and linear plot progression. They usually have an obnoxious reliance on random encounter battles, over-the-top magical spells, and characters with spiky blue hair, funny heads, and giant round eyes. *Final Fantasy VIII* at least spares us the funny heads. Truth be told, *FFVIII* for the PlayStation is a really good game. Fortunately this PC port spares no time getting right into the action, and unlike its predecessor, has some semblance of an intelligent, if incredibly linear plot. It also has realistic human characters and stunning cinematic sequences. SquareSoft clearly invested a sizeable chunk of development dollars in the game's movies, creating scenes with incredible detail and fast-paced action.



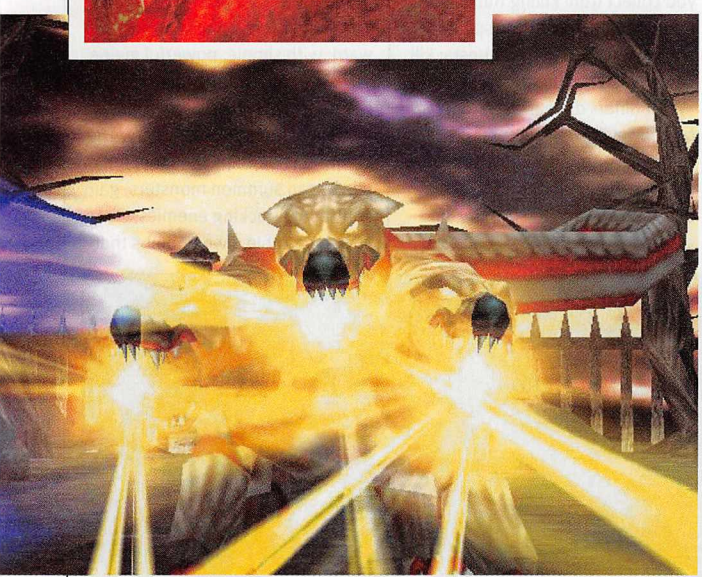
The game itself might seem a bit silly to traditional RPG'ers. It boils down to trotting around, getting into battles, gaining new possessions, more battles, some plot progression, more battles, and playing the optional, highly in-depth card game against characters you meet. The character building system is interesting, and familiar for players of the last game, but the reliance on the Guardian Forces — creatures that bond with party members — is way too vital to your characters' abilities.

What's more, you still can't skip past the flatulent Guardian Force attack sequences in battles. These episodes are around 30 seconds each and are absolutely stunning ... the first three times. After that, they get boring and annoying. Given that you have almost no choice but to use these attacks repeatedly, the inability to skip such scenes is damn infuriating.

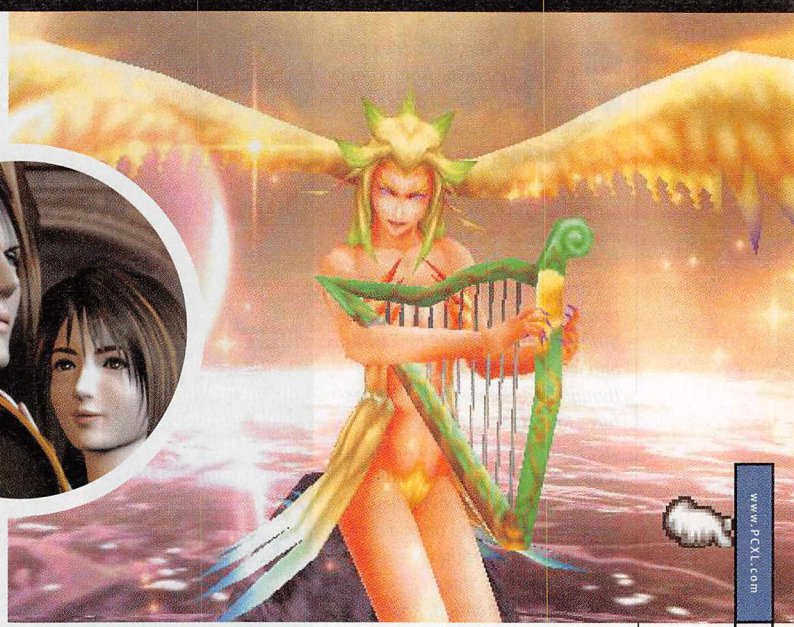
More crucially, Square made no effort to add any special element for the PC version. The character graphics and battles are 3D accelerated, but the backgrounds are still low-res. The game only plays at 640x480, while the character graphics that were so stunning on the PlayStation don't match any PC specific games. Furthermore, the control scheme is crap, emulating a PlayStation pad on your gamepad or keyboard. It would've been nice if you could hit the ESC key to reach an option menu. And mouse control? Not a chance.

Sure, *FFVIII* is a great example of its genre, but there's nothing more than a pure port here — you might as well be running this through the Bleem emulator. This game even has the "Checking Memory Card Slots" screen when saving. That alone is a shame, but if you held off buying the console version for this, sadly, you're getting the very same thing.

— **JASON D'APRILE** *has a final fantasy: To get a date*



With this bad puppy, his bark really is as bad as his bite. Good thing he's on your side.



Those weird wingy things and the harp music have gotta go.

GRAPHICS Stunning cinematics and 3D-accelerated battles, but low-res backgrounds and low poly characters.

SOUND Cheesy sounding music all around really ruins the mood of this game.

DEPTH In-depth character building system to tweak party members, long play time, and lots of quests.

DESIGN Excellent console RPG, but very linear and too reliant on Guardian Forces and random battles.

PLUSES

+ Stunning cinematic sequences
+ Cool character building system
+ Solid story
+ Generally decent pacing

MINUSES

– Lame port to PC
– Lousy controls
– Low-res backgrounds and generally lacking graphics

RATING

www.PCXL.com

In the U.S., SquareSoft released *FFI, FFII, FFIII, FFVII, FFVIII* — can't they count?

PUBLISHER ···› Electronic Arts	**DEVELOPER** ···› Westwood Studios
REQUIRED ···› P200, 32MB RAM, 300MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM drive, 2MB video card	**IDEAL** ···› PII 300, 64MB RAM, 400MB hard drive, 3D accelerator card

Nox

ACCELE-RATED

While *Nox* has all the flash and speed of a 3D game, it is done entirely in software mode. Amazing effects and graphic touches that'll make you think your 3D accelerator is working overtime — but it's not.

The closest you'll get to *Diablo II* without being a beta tester

As I ran down the corridor away from a gang of ogres, I ducked into a side room — only to discover a giant rock troll next to a smashed cage, a toothy grin on his face. He started lurching my way, arms spread wide as though ready for an embrace.

Fortunately, I knew better than to believe those stories about male bonding with reformed rock trolls, and wisely backed away. Then a thought struck me. I used the gestures that create a Marker spell and scurried out. True to form, those idiot ogres had retreated down the corridor, where they were arguing how to open a closed door. I gestured at them — not a magical one this time.

It got their attention. Roaring in anger, they came at me, clubs raised. Just as quickly, I prepped and cast a series of Teleport To Marker spells, and watched with satisfaction as they disappeared one by one. I then cleaned my nails for a few minutes. (Wizards, like everybody else, should be concerned with personal hygiene.)

Finally, I reopened the door. Behind it was the rock troll ... surrounded by several piles of whitening goblin bones. One crew of enemies down. But I couldn't breathe easy; not yet. As the troll gnashed his dentures at me, it was clear my presence wasn't appreciated.

— From the Nox *Diaries of Pavel Brenesal (deceased)*

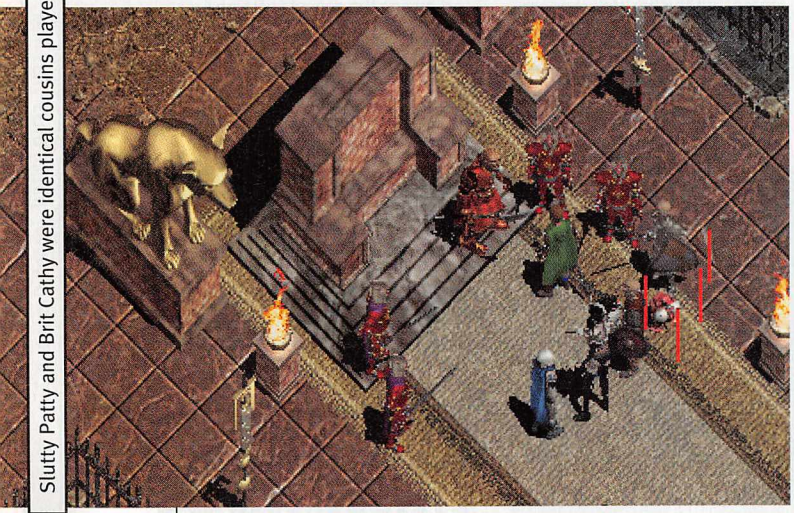
Here you rescue the town's engineer. If his mumbling voice isn't provided by one of the game's programmers, I'll buy a hat and eat it.

Yes, Sherlock, it's a *Diablo* clone. What these screens won't show you, however, is that *Nox* is the most successful heir to *Diablo* yet, and brings some interesting changes of its own to this genre, particularly in multiplay.

To quote that nonpareil of taste, "The Patty Duke Show," "They look alike/they walk alike/at times/they even talk alike." Like *Diablo*, *Nox* employs an isometric view as your hero drudges down into dungeons deep. The booty you collect from killing things goes to upgrading your arms, spells, and wardrobe. Get new quests; kill new monsters; upgrade. Got it?

Nox differs dramatically from *Diablo*, however, in being carefully calculated every cobblestone step of the way. The locations are predesigned down to the last tree and skeleton, while the game controls the location and amount of everything, down to the last gold coin. It also automatically assigns upgrade points (for speed, hit points, mana, and strength) rather than letting you shape your own growth. (Not a favorable point in my book.)

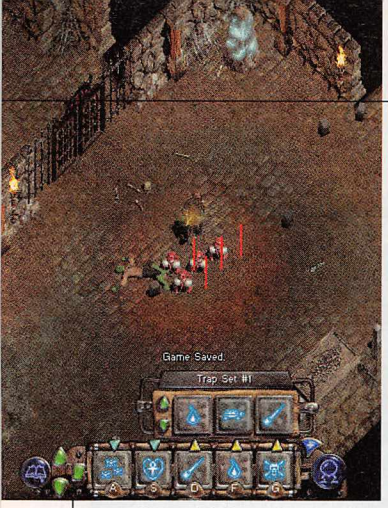
Of *Nox*'s three professions, the Warrior is the most straightforward, with simple, powerful melee attacks. The Wizard gets to cast a raft of spells, including Invisibility and short-term Invulnerability. The Conjurer is perhaps the most fun of all. He can summon monsters, gain control of attacking enemies, and create portable, living bombs that



It's Hecubah! If her spells don't kill you, her dialog will.

You can revive your flagging spirits and mana at the same time.

Slutty Patty and Brit Cathy were identical cousins played by Patty Duke — We always liked Patty more www.DailyRadar.com



Traveling with four giggling humanoid bombs.

The wizard may cast spells, but his lab looks like a chemist's.

They grow scorpions real big in this here part of Texas.

seek out enemies and contain up to three spells of your choice.

Some *Nox* dungeons are also unique to your choice of profession, while others share quests. As a Warrior, you'll have to rescue an artifact for your leader, Horrendous, but as a Wizard, you'll need to slip into his citadel and steal it. So if *Nox* lacks endless replay value, at least you can play it three times, and each dungeon feels more personalized, with unique elements (trap types, elevators, teleportals, hidden areas) that give it character.

Good news for dungeon addicts — your hero regains health and magic points over time. On the other hand, *Nox* nixes unlimited ranged ammunition. Since monsters move swiftly, if you don't aim right, you're out of arrows before you know it.

If we haven't discussed the plot yet (and we haven't), it's because there's nothing to discuss. It's just your standard "Rescue All the Artifact Parts Quest," though there's an Evil Being (Hecubah, scantily dressed in black) one step ahead of you most of the way.

Don't look for genuine roleplaying elements here, either. There aren't multiple ways to solve any quest — *Nox* is a realtime, action-packed dungeon killfest, pure and simple, with a lot of atmosphere. The quality artwork, assortment of detailed animation, and realtime lighting and shadow effects are so powerful, you can almost feel the third degree burns as flames leap suddenly from vents beneath your feet, or the crunch of bones beneath spiked arms that swing from dungeon walls.

When you're done with the single-player mode, you'll be more prepared for the magic of *Nox* multiplayer, where it truly shines. Westwood Online is finally well-designed and very capable of handling the hectic action of *Nox*'s many multiplayer modes, including Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, or King of the Realm. The combinations of spells and items make multiplay a new experience.

A typical battle might involve casting Slow, Fumble, and Lightning — the Fumble spell to make them drop their items, Lightning to do constant damage, and the Slow spell to ensure they don't reach you before they die. The player being attacked, in response, might cast Reflective Shield, and then run to pick up the dropped items from the reflected Fumble spell. Or, failing to counter, he might die. It's the intricacy of multiplayer that sets *Nox* apart from the others.

Nox avoids the bugs and poor two-person party of *Darkstone*, the low replayability of *Revenant*, and the inept controls of *Silver*. True, it could have offered more character statistic configs, but the dungeons are trickier and more absorbing than anything produced by the competition, the monsters are great, and the game's worth it for the Conjurer class alone. If you're an action fan, don't miss *Nox*.

— **BARRY BRENESAL** *is most definitely not "King of His Castle"*

NOX-ZEMA

THEN ...

Normally, anti-aging, wrinkling, and firming cremes don't really show up on our radar (other than as a desperation lubricant, of course). However the wise (and likely perverted) marketing execs at Noxzema did the world a favor by discovering the lovely (and who cares if she's talented) Rebecca Gayheart

... AND NOW

GRAPHICS Upgraded *Diablo*: More of the same, just a helluva lot prettier and well-executed.

SOUND Great soundtrack, with a nice variety of selections. Voice-overs are generally "ass."

DEPTH Excellent replayability across three very distinct professions. But all dungeons are preconfigured.

DESIGN The basic *Diablo* template enhanced by hidden areas, new spells, and a variety of opponents.

PLUSES

+ Great graphics
+ Dungeons are reconfigured for your particular character class
+ Combined spells to create traps

MINUSES

– All dungeons and their contents are calculated
– No control over your character's statistical advancement

RATING 8

EverQuest® The Ruins of Kunark™

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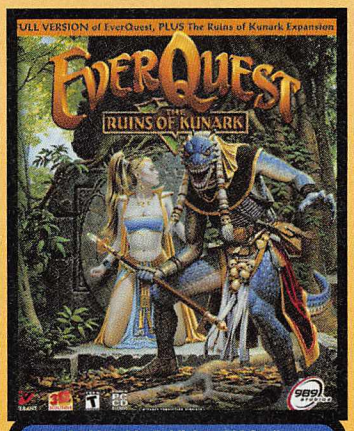
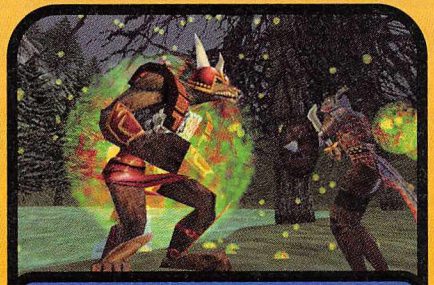


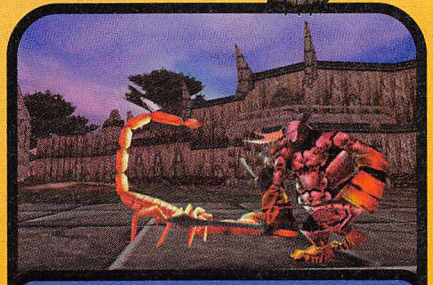
Machine: PC **Publisher:** 989 Studios
Genre: Online RPG **# of Players:** Thousands

"The most addictive online role playing game in existence is about to get another infusion. The **EverQuest** expansion, **Ruins of Kunark**, introduces an entire new player race, a huge new continent, and a plethora of new monsters, dungeons, items, and cities. Along with modifications to the existing engine to allow for even more advancement of current characters, this is one expansion that will inspire an entire new wave of addiction in players. We're literally beating up members of Verant and 989 Studios for an inside peek." — **DailyRadar.com**

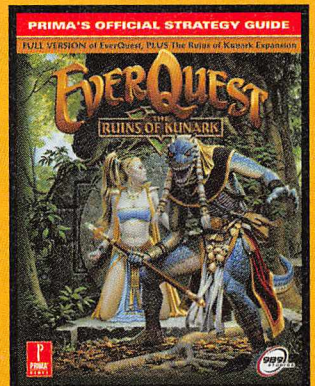
Iksar Shadowknight battles a Lycanthrope in Warslik's Wood.



Troll and Iksar hunt a Forest Giant in the Field of Bone.



Troll and Giant Scorpion fight to the death near the buried city of Kaesora.



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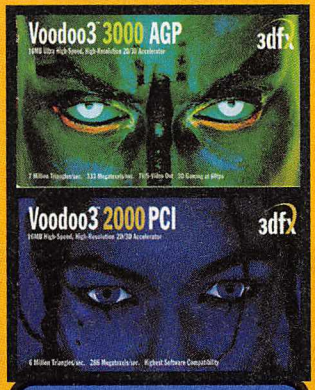

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DIABLO II

Machine: PC
Publisher: Havas/Blizzard
Genre: RPG/Action
# of Players: Eight

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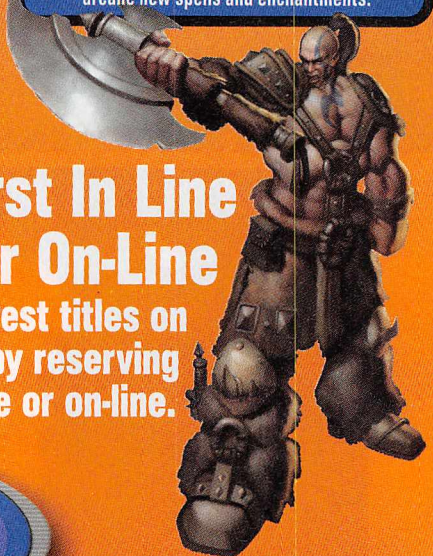
"The best gets better. **Diablo II** will likely be an early candidate for game of the year ... There are now five classes of player character – amazon, barbarian, necromancer, paladin, and sorceress. Each class offers characters 30 unique skills, arranged in skill trees ... The random level generation that made the original Diablo so timeless will remain for **Diablo II**, and with vast improvements ... **Diablo II**, far from being a simple retread, will open up a whole new world of hellspawn goodness ... Hands down, **Diablo II** is the most eagerly awaited title of the coming year ..." – **DailyRadar.com**

Battle Hell's minions as the Amazon, Sorceress, Necromancer, Barbarian, or Paladin.

Challenge the ultimate evil over four expansive realms.

Harness the energies of light and darkness with arcane new spells and enchantments.

Real gamers will want to add Unraveler and Barbarian to their collection. Watch for the upcoming release of these action figures plus the Diablo II figure when the game hits.



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PUBLISHER ···› Interplay	**DEVELOPER** ···› Mirage
REQUIRED ···› P200, 32MB RAM, 70MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 3D accelerator	**IDEAL** ···› PII 450, 64MB RAM, 12+MB 3D card, an intense hatred of Nazis

ACCELE-RATED

Great eye candy wrapped around an engine eerily similar to *Unreal*. D3D support works with any nVidia card, and the colors looked amazing on the GeForce (though the cards' clipping continues to be a problem).

Mortyr

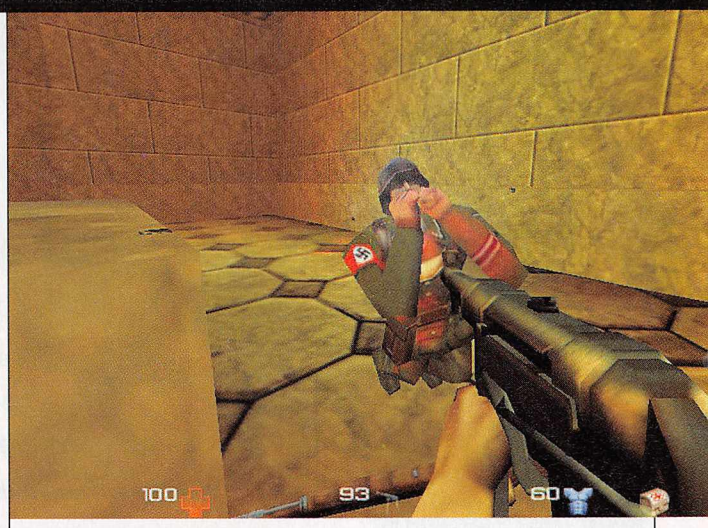
Because those Nazi bastards deserve to die — over and over and over and over ...

Those of you with a long memory might remember *Mortyr*. It's the game I-Magic was proud to be publishing initially. Unfortunately UbiSoft denounced the game when they bought I-Magic's catalog of titles. Eventually, Interplay managed to get it to store shelves. This beautiful, yet simple, revamp on the old Nazi-busting *Wolfenstein 3D* theme is one of those completely "by the numbers" shooters, with not a shred of innovation or originality.

In a nutshell, during World War II, the Nazis got themselves a time machine and used it to turn the tides of war in their favor. Jump to 2093 — the world is falling apart, the evil Regime stands, and you are the last hope for a world gone crazy over bratwurst and Adolph. Sent back to 1944, you must stop the Nazi threat. To accomplish this task, you basically kill everything. You also find keys of various colors and shapes, and occasionally read "plot-building" journal entries that (much like the original *Unreal*) threaten to lead the story somewhere, but infuriatingly never do.

Powering this non-story is an engine of dazzling lights, vast architecture, mirrored floors, rain, and other bits of eye candy, also strikingly reminiscent of *Unreal*. Despite occasionally inspired level design, the maps are extremely linear.

The game splits itself up into levels set in 1944 and 2093 — not that you'd really notice since there's no segue or much visual difference between the two. One minute you're running through a dark tunnel in the past, then watching a blank loading screen, and suddenly it's the future. On the other hand, even though the World War II weapons aren't very glamorous, they have an authentic style. The single shot rifle, in particular, is great for sniping and its shortcomings make for interesting decisions during the mindless action. All told, there are machine, laser, and chain guns, pistols, a mind control weapon, the flamethrower, grenades, and your hero's big-ass boot — nothing really ground-breaking.



"Beg for mercy, Nazi scum!"

The AI Nazi bastards are aggressively good shots, and will occasionally follow you around corners, but they're generally pretty stupid krauts, and the level design annoyingly relies on spawning in enemies behind you (the lowest of low in lame design tactics, by the way). Character details are lacking as well, and the lower polygon count gives enemies a noticeably blocky appearance. On the up side, the multiplayer options actually allow for cooperative play, so you and your buddies can go Nazi hunting together if you're so inclined (and you can find a buddy willing to endure the general monotony).

There's nothing particularly wrong with *Mortyr* if all you want is an average mindless shooter, but even something as fun as killing fascist scum gets boring. The sharp engine could certainly have powered something more compelling. This game is mediocre at best.

— **JASON D'APRILE** *is an average mindless guy, but we still like him*

Mmm, fried Nazis — one of the highlights of the game.

GRAPHICS Reflective surfaces, foggy lighting, and vast architecture, but simplistic character models.

SOUND Suitably dramatic music and gunfire, but annoying sound glitches and atmospheric effects.

DEPTH Kill Nazi scum! Appears to be leading you to something more, mostly it's the same-old, same-old.

DESIGN Nice levels and weapons, but standard stuff, with too much reliance on lame enemy spawning.

PLUSES

+ Excellent level graphics
+ Authentic weapons
+ Kill Nazis by the metric ton
+ Reminiscent of *Unreal*

MINUSES

– Out of date gameplay
– No focus on story makes it vacant
– Dumb Nazis aren't fun to kill
– Too much enemy respawning

RATING 5.0

www.DailyRadar.com

Rumor has it Adolph Hitler was a big fan of "golden showers" (when a woman urinates on your head)

PUBLISHER ···› Interplay Productions	DEVELOPER ···› Monte Cristo Multimedia
REQUIRED ···› P166, 16MB RAM, 30MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM	IDEAL ···› PII 266, 32MB RAM, 50MB RAM, 12X CD-ROM

Wall Street Trader 2000

ACCELE-RATED

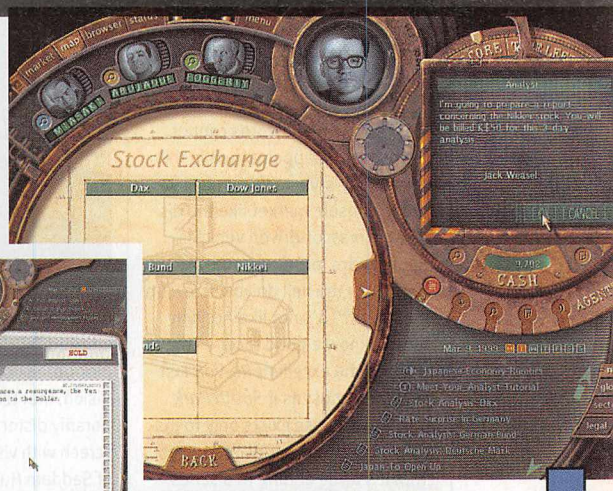
Grainy FMV and still photography require all the graphics power of the latest in 2D acceleration — you know, that Stealth 64 or similar. Let's face it, this game will run successfully on an eMachine.

Spreadsheets? In PCXL?

"The name's Vinson, but they call me Vinnie the Snake. I specialize in hostile takeovers of big name corporations on major stock exchanges. It started a year ago, when I was a wet-behind-the-ears investment analyst with a law degree, an MBA, and a talent for lying. The old man, Basil Fleming, called me into his office. He said I looked good. I was ambitious, but I had a lot of growing to do. He was going to throw me in with the sharks with a basketful of money to see if I would sink or swim."

In *Wall Street Trader 2000*, your mentor Lord Fleming assigns you a series of fixed "missions," each with its own increasingly difficult goal. At first you have access to only four or five stocks, each with realistic (but easy-to-understand) detail such as the key factors that affect that stock's performance. The entire game covers two real-time game years, and puts you in a position to invest in 70 internationally recognized equities against three AI-driven opponents.

"Now it's real hard to swim while you're holding a basket, so I figured I'd get a little outside help. I hired an expensive stock analyst, and an insider who gave me advice on, shall we say, shadier deals. I also acquired a lawyer to protect me from the fallout, and some spies to investigate enemies' portfolios."



The analyst in *WST 2000* is pretty disappointing, supplying only vague, one sentence answers that could have come direct from a Magic 8-Ball. But the insiders and lawyers were useful and ratcheted up the level of tension in this real-time tickertape game. The spies can be used aggressively against your enemies, or for counter-espionage, to cover your own assets.

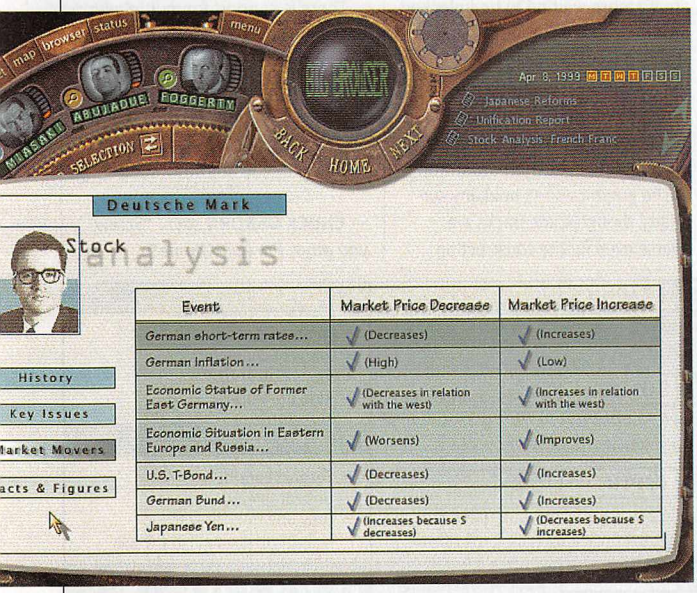
"What surprised me was that so much depended on immediate, short-term factors. I didn't really have to do any homework — no boring analysis of performance ratios and graphs. Hey, it works for me, except that sometimes I felt like I was flying blind."

Does this look like a game? Just keep saying the PCXL WST 2000 mantra: Greed = Good.

Performance measurement tools are slim in *WST 2000*. The game relies almost entirely on short-term indicators like interest rate hikes, completely ignoring long-term factors. Still, the video footage of news announcements feels authentic, and lends a visceral thrill to your progress (or descent into obscurity). The interface is excellent, with everything a click away — except for the realtime speed control, which is three clicks back on the options menu. You can play *WST 2000* on the Internet via TCP/IP or LAN, but hostile takeovers in multiplayer mode are regrettably disabled.

"After everything they tell you about finance being boring, my ride to success was a real trip. I learned something about the cut-throat nature of the market, and more importantly, I destroyed the careers of many other insidious, despicable wretches like myself. In short, I had a lot of fun."

— BARRY "VINNIE" BRENESAL *is still working on his first million*



Instead of throwing tons of meaningless figures at you, WST 2000 provides useful data summaries (and Charlie Sheen).

GRAPHICS Simple 2D menus, but the video footage is well-integrated, varied, and attractive.

SOUND Professionally done voiceovers offer a sense of involvement with the weasels of financial markets.

DEPTH For all its ease of play, there's a lot of number-crunching going on behind the scenes.

DESIGN Nicely done, except for the absence of a hotkey to change the simulation's speed.

PLUSES

+ No two games play alike
+ Actual sense of humor
+ Don't lose any real money
+ Emphasizes "thrill of the kill"

MINUSES

– No long-term strategies
– Doesn't permit deal-making (or back-knifing) with rivals
– Needs more scenarios

RATING

www.PCXL.com

Vinnie Vincent, "The Egyptian," replaced KISS' Ace Frehley from 1982-84

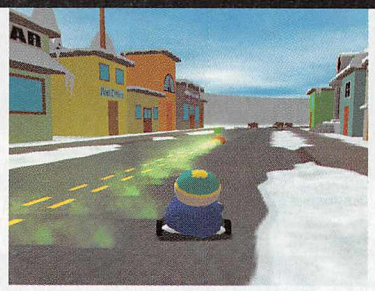
PUBLISHER ···› Acclaim	**DEVELOPER** ···› Tantalus Interactive
REQUIRED ···› P200, 32MB RAM, 170MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 4MB D3D-compatible card	**IDEAL** ···› PII 400, 128MB RAM, Voodoo3, store with a liberal return policy

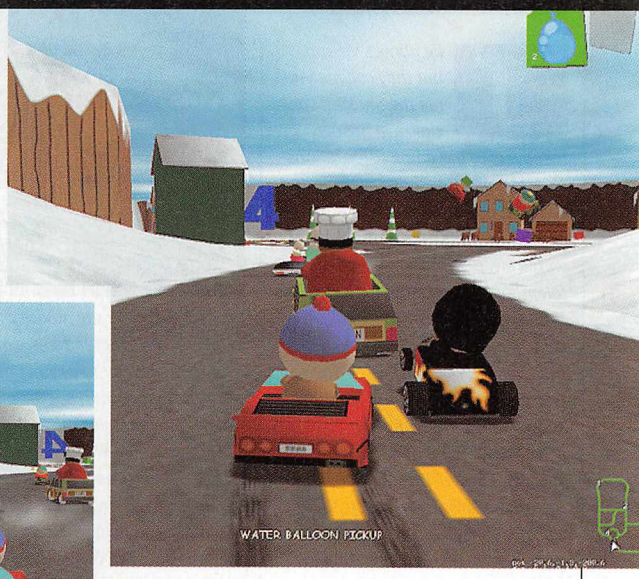
South Park Rally

ACCELE-RATED

While the game ran fine on a Voodoo3, some windowed graphics were MIA on our GeForce 256 DDR board. But if you're lucky, you'll miss the graphics completely by not buying *SPR* in the first place.

Dude! This game sucks ass

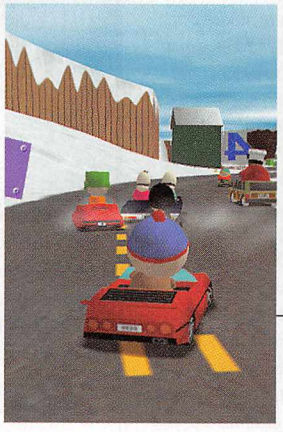




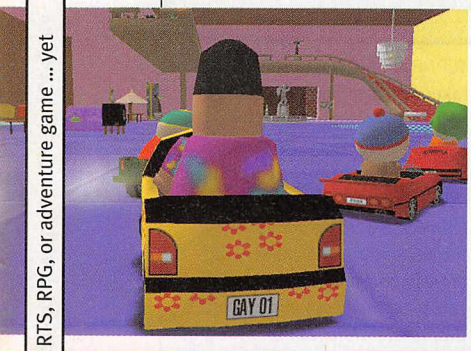
"I've got something for your ass."
— Eric Cartman

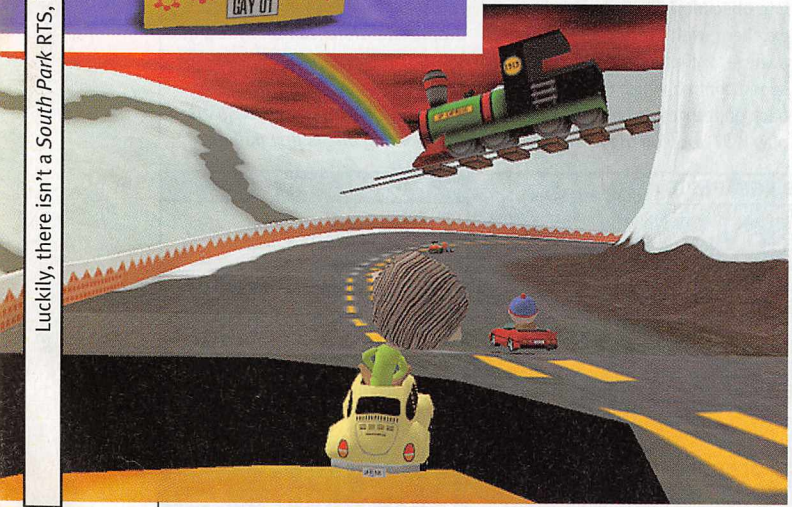
Mere words cannot express my disappointment in this game. Rally-style racing games litter the console market like the disposable mascot-driven vehicles that they are, prompting the question: "How the hell do you screw up *Mario Kart*?" It's not like Acclaim doesn't know a good racer — they released the excellent *Re-Volt* last year. It's almost as if *South Park Rally*'s awfulness exists only to justify completing a perfect trilogy of crap. It's a vile ending to a series that started with the first-person clone *South Park*, moving to the game show clone *Chef's Luv Shack*, and culminating in yet another clone worse than its predecessors.

For what it's worth, *South Park Rally* features nearly all the town's residents racing in a series of 14 holiday-themed championship rallies, complete with 21 power-ups and one genuinely inspired "suck-ass" pick-up, Spooky Vision, that temporarily distorts the screen with visions of Saddam Hussein's slyly malevolent face. Power-ups are appropriately *South Park*-ian in their lunacy (my favorite is Frida the Hooker who gives fellow racers a screen-blemishing case of herpes, the dildo homing missile, and an anal probe that makes opponents sing instead of race). But once the novelty wears off, you'll realize how little they affect gameplay.



Two major problems prevented me from enjoying this game — horrendous control and infallible AI that gives your opponents the edge in every race. Every car makes turns so wide and clumsy that you'd think you were racing zeppelins.





You better win the race, or you'll be stuck on this track forever.

What would Brian Boitano do?

Car control is supposed to differ due to make and weight, but they all feel the same.

Worse yet, in both championship and arcade modes, you're greeted with only one unlocked track. You'll have to win first place to unlock the next, until all 14 are unlocked. You also start with eight *South Park* characters, but there are 27 more waiting to be unlocked by winning races or performing stunts. Creative tracks may keep the action fresh in multiplayer where everyone is handicapped by bad control, but make the single-player game even more frustrating.

The graphics don't hold any surprises, though some tracks are sparse even for the construction paper cutout world of *South Park*. Individual cars are uniformly imaginative and each character has several (repetitive) sayings. Another annoyance is that while there are four different control methods (keyboard, joystick, gamepad, steering wheel), all keyboard buttons used for quitting or exiting to the main menu are disabled if you choose any control scheme other than the default keyboard setup.

There is support for multiplayer LAN games (where you can literally beat the asses off opponents), but no Internet support, which is ok — you'd be hard pressed to find anybody willing to play this pile of Mr. Hanky with you anyway.

— CHUCK OSBORN *says, "Screw you guys, I'm goin' home"*

GRAPHICS As expected, the graphics look exactly like the TV show, but in 3D.

SOUND Loads of voice samples, but that's it. At least it doesn't have the annoying squawking turkeys.

DEPTH While it does wade safely in the shallow end of the pool, it is more goal-oriented than most racers.

DESIGN Poor — "no brainer" concept even further derailed by "no brain" design.

PLUSES

+ Creative courses
+ Loads of characters
+ Funny power-ups
+ Frida the Hooker

MINUSES

– Terrible control
– Unbeatable AI
– Only one track at start-up
– Restarting is a pain in the ass

RATING 3

Luckily, there isn't a *South Park* RTS, RPG, or adventure game ... yet

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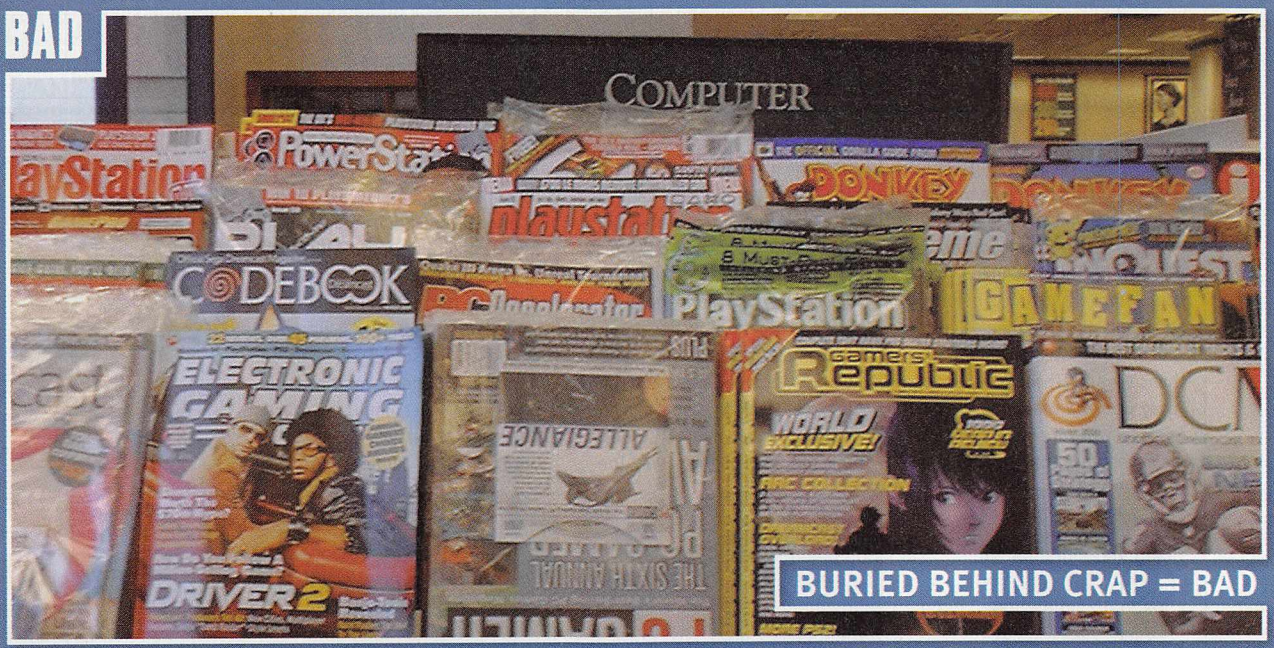
Isn't it time to start making the world a better place?

BAD



BURIED BEHIND CRAP = BAD

GOOD

FRONT AND CENTER = GOOD

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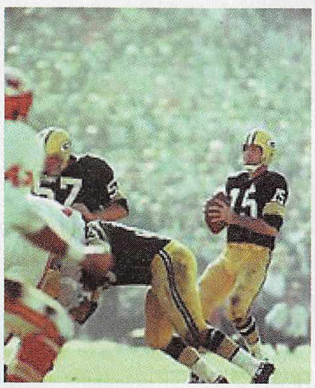
Is the Super Bowl for Chicks?

All season long manly football fans trudge their way to the local bar at ungodly hours, (at least on the West Coast) force down drinks before noon, and surround themselves with slovenly losers, just for a chance to see "The Lord's Game." For 17 weeks we continue this pilgrimage, worshipping our team until eventually they get knocked out of the playoffs because of a bad call (it's always the ref's fault — remember that). Meanwhile our wives, sisters, and girlfriends go shopping, to church, or similar unnecessary and mundane tasks. Finally, when the crowning moment of our sport arrives, the flatulent network (this year it was ABC) panders to the fricking casual fan! Annoying human interest stories, a pregame show on the set of "The View" (the last thing I want to hear on Super Bowl Sunday is Barbara Walters commenting on players' butts), a half-time show with bolts of shiny material and singing children. The game was great, but everything surrounding it was chickified. The sound you heard on Super Bowl Sunday was Vince Lombardi rolling over in his grave. I'm only going to ask this once: Give us back our game, dammit!



Notes for next year's Super Bowl: Lauryn Hill = good. Tina Turner = old, crusty, and generally not good.

Has anyone seen Larry Brown since Neil O'Donnell single-handedly made him the Super Bowl MVP?

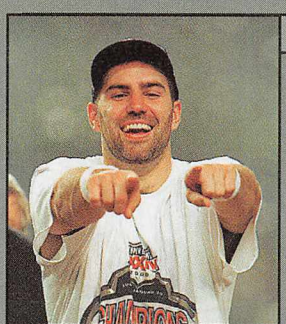
FANTASY SPORTS FRAG

BRENDA WARNER

WHY WE HATE HER··· Throughout the latter part of the '99 football season, we sat in quiet awe of Kurt Warner. We laid on our couches, scarfing Doritos and guzzling beer, transfixed by his high-speed ascent to football stardom. We came to believe that Warner, who only five years ago was a minimum wage-earning stock clerk, was "the man" — until we tuned into the Super Bowl and discovered he was married to one. Take a good look at this freakish creature, and try to hold down your lunch. How could this blatantly lesbian, Bible-pounding, quite possibly transsexual, Susan Powter-lookalike be married to the NFL's MVP?

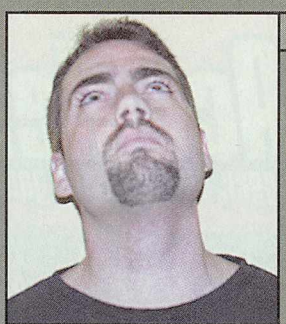
HOW SHE SHOULD BE FRAGGED··· It's obvious that Warner resorted to this woman during his grocery store clerk days, when he had no hope of ever getting out of the Arena League. Now that he's a multi-millionaire and can land any babe he lays eyes on, he should simply do like every other overpaid athlete in the world, and dump her ass. It's not like she couldn't make her own damn money by doing the Dinah Shore golf tour or joining the Indigo Girls. (Before anyone gets all huffy about this frag, please know that we have no problem with lesbians. We actually like them, in our sick little way — just not ones that are manlier than we are.) Whatever, this charade's gone on long enough, Kurt. Come back to us!

WONDER TWINS



KURT WARNER

- A NOBODY WHO MADE IT BIG
- SMALL TOWN HICK THAT MADE GOOD
- THREW SEVEN INCOMPLETE PASSES IN THE SUPER BOWL
- MARRIED TO A WOMAN THAT LOOKS LIKE CLORIS LEACHMAN
- HE'S "GOING TO DISNEYLAND"



CHUCK OSBORN

- A NOBODY WHO IS BIG
- SMALL TOWN HICK WHO WRITES GOOD
- THREW SEVEN INCOMPLETE PASSES AT A SEEDY BAR
- WATCHED EVERY TV SHOW STARRING CLORIS LEACHMAN
- HE'S WORKED AT DISNEYLAND

The Boys of Summer are back

A quick look at what 2000 will be like on the virtual diamond

Last year *High Heat Baseball 2000* established itself as the dominant baseball title with the best gameplay for two years running. *Triple Play* still sold better — but what does the public know? Longtime contender Accolade finally hung up its cleats and called it quits on the *Hardball* series (no one noticed), and Interplay's VR Sports mercifully halted production on *VR Baseball*. What we're left with is a three-horse race, and three pretty big horses at that. Microsoft and EA have the size and history, while 3DO has the legacy of making a good baseball game. Here is our look at the race for the pennant in this year's baseball games.

Triple Play 2001

DEVELOPER ···›	EA Sports
PUBLISHER ···›	EA Sports
RELEASE DATE ···›	April
LAST YEAR'S SCORE ···›	7

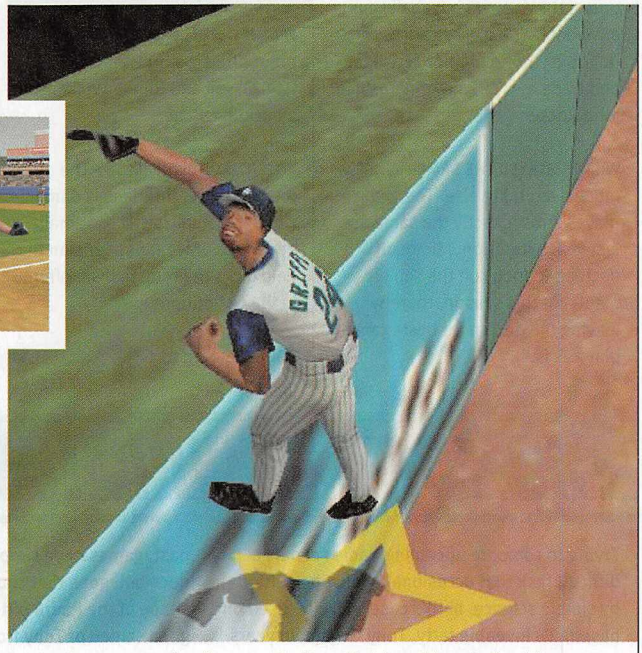
WHAT HAS CHANGED ···› Any pretense of being a baseball simulation has been thrown out the window as EA has decided to focus entirely on making an arcade baseball game. The players now get power-ups, find mystery stadiums, and generally do things you'd never see in baseball.

WHAT HAS STAYED THE SAME ···› The unintuitive pitcher/batter interface looks like the same beast as last year. Player faces are back and improved. The slick presentation, fast gameplay, and smooth graphics all return as well.

FEATURE WE LIKE BEST ···› Players now taunt and show emotion on the field — something sorely lacking in real baseball.

POTENTIAL DOWNFALLS ···› The choice to go arcade all the way isn't good news for baseball purists, and the arcade part of *Triple Play* has never really been that good.

THE LINE ···› 100 to 1



Junior leaps over the fence at Safeco Field and heads for Cincy.

Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001

DEVELOPER ···›	Team .366
PUBLISHER ···›	3DO
RELEASE DATE ···›	Early March
LAST YEAR'S SCORE ···›	9

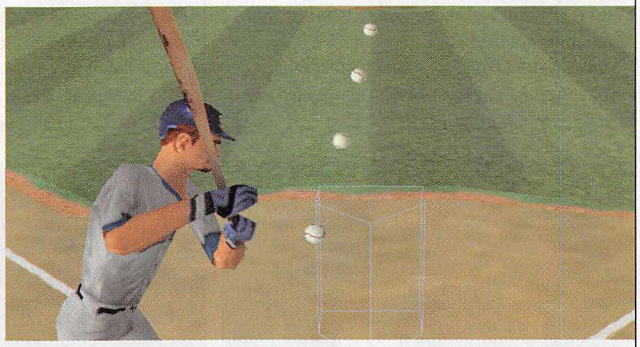
WHAT'S CHANGED ···› The Dominican slugger's name is now on the game and play mechanics are improved and add to the depth of the game. The custom leagues allow you to set up your own format and the graphics (while still similar in look) have made significant strides in more realistic player models.

WHAT'S STAYED THE SAME ···› The best pitcher/batter interface in baseball gaming is back yet again and has improved even more. The sharp control, realistic results, and amazing attention to detail that made this series great continue to be the best.

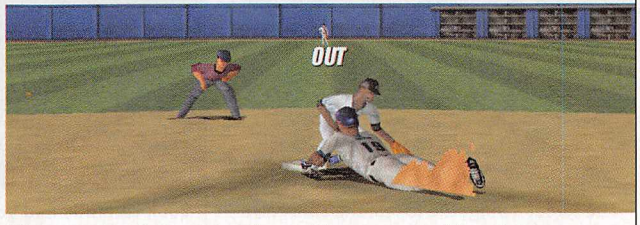
FEATURE WE LIKE BEST ···› We like the new instant replay of called third strikes that really shows whether the ump made a good or bad call. It's great for debates. It is relatively unimportant, but relevant to note that umpires do not make bad calls in the game or in real life. Rather, they tend to have their "own" strike zone. What + ever.

POTENTIAL DOWNFALLS ···› Despite some major upgrades, the game still looks and feels the same as last year — until you get deep in the game's great mechanics. The only real drawback of *High Heat* is that it hasn't sold well — at all. So really it's all your fault. Stop buying inferior products and pick up this game, it will not disappoint.

THE LINE ···› 5 to 1



Instant replay now shows bad calls like this "called" strike three.



High Heat is all about details, and it gets most of 'em right.

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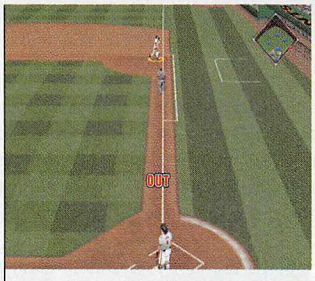
Number of times ABC felt the need to show one of the greatest plays in Super Bowl history: Three

Microsoft Baseball 2001

DEVELOPER ···›	EA Sports
PUBLISHER ···›	EA Sports
RELEASE DATE ···›	Late March '00
LAST YEAR'S SCORE ···›	6



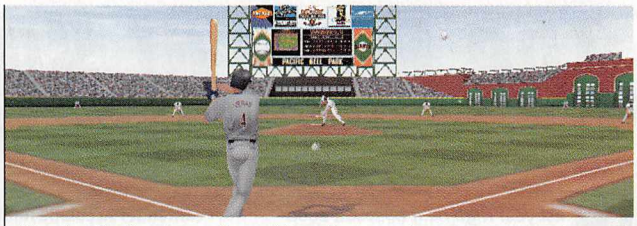
WHAT'S CHANGED···› The award-winning spreadsheet-like *Baseball Mogul* simulation technology has been put in place and it instantly makes *Microsoft Baseball 2001* one of the deepest baseball sims anywhere. You can set prices on hot dogs, dump high-priced vets, and trade away PR nightmares like John Rocker.

WHAT'S STAYED THE SAME···› Pretty much everything else. The game plays almost exactly the same as last year's iteration. Microsoft decided to focus on the sim elements for this season, thereby leaving the decent (at best) gameplay "as is."

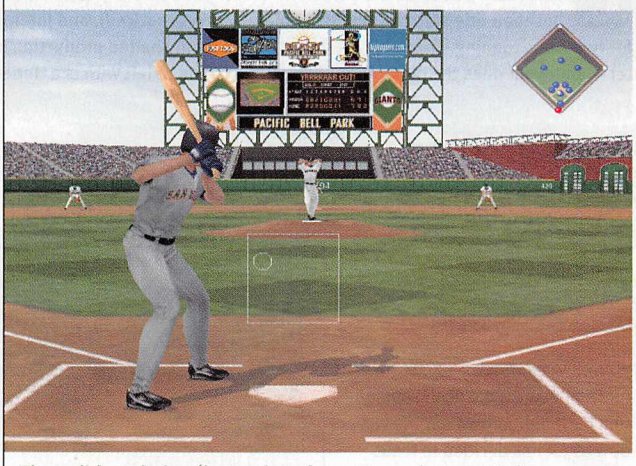
FEATURE WE LIKE BEST···› The computer offered a brilliant trade of Paul O'Neil and Bernie Williams for a backup catcher.

POTENTIAL DOWNFALLS···› The pitcher/batter interface is damn clunky, the ball is still too small, and much of what happens on the field lacks the total realism offered in the GM options.

THE LINE···› 20 to 1



The depth of a sim and graphics of an arcade game — sound good?



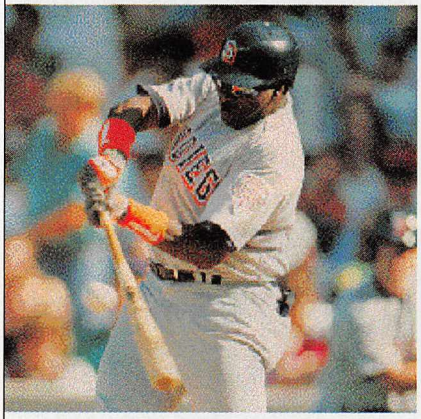
The asinine pitcher/batter interface returns in tact. Oh joy.

The Tony Gwynn Test

Trying to compare upcoming games can be a difficult task that occasionally must be settled by simple science. In this case we've focused on baseball's loveable fatty, Tony Gwynn. In years past, games simply not been able to produce polygons that could manage the rotund shape of the Padre hitter. We couldn't actually get a screen of Tony from *Triple Play*, but we will compare what we've seen. We're not sure if these results are the real determining factor, but it is science and science is always coming to the wrong conclusions anyway.

The Real Tony Gwynn

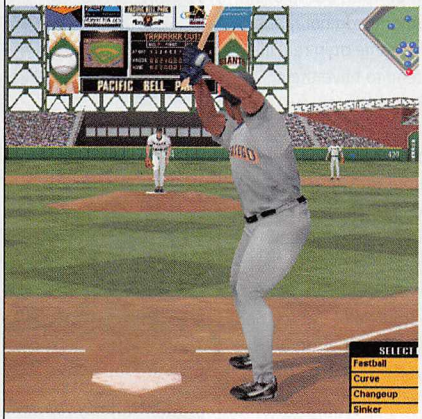
GUT: The stout paunch has the look of a belly that has yet to turn down a chili dog
BUTT: Not that we've ever looked, but Tony has definitely got back
TONY GWYNN SCORE: 10 — The perfect replica of Tony Gwynn, only Chris Gwynn can even come close to this "fatterpiece"



The sweet swing, the focus, the concentration ... and the rolls of fat.

Microsoft Baseball 2001

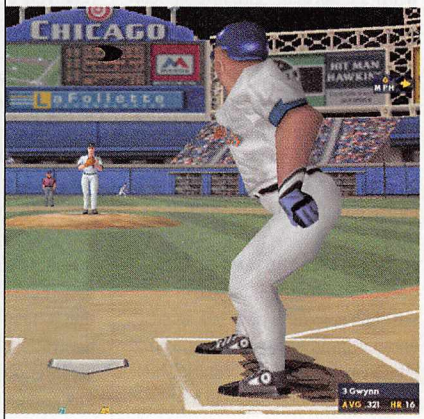
GUT: Beautifully round, hanging over the belt — but still a bit thin
BUTT: Apparently fat-ass technology is still a ways off, as *MB 2001* just can't match Tony below the belt
TONY GWYNN SCORE: 8 — Fat and round, well done. Easily the best we've seen



Look carefully and you'll notice that Tony is actually eyeing the hot dog vendor.

Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001

GUT: Where's the roundness? At least they made him big, but it looks more like muscle
BUT: Taut athletic buns — Tony hasn't had anything resembling "taut" or "athletic" since he was a freshman in high school
TONY GWYNN SCORE: 3 — Looks more like a bodybuilder than a fat baseball player



Sammy Sosa's High Heat Andro Conditioning Program produces amazing results!

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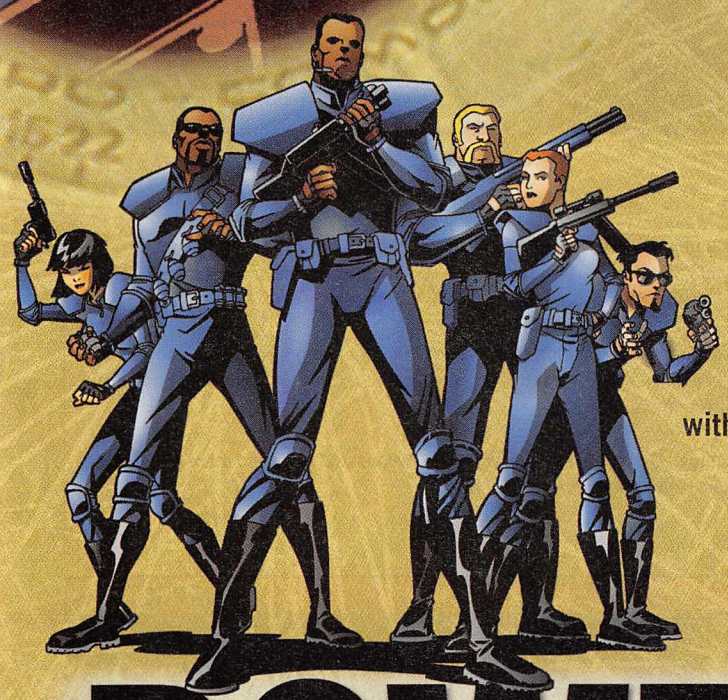

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PCXL Fight Night

UNREAL TOURNAMENT VS. QUAKE 3 ARENA

Do you hear the jungle drums? It's the percussive sound of deathmatch fever, beating its way to the ring where the final showdown will take place, deciding once and for all which bitch brings home the bacon. In one corner, from Mesquite, Texas, arriving in a silver metal box and given life by the cream of the game developer crop, El Diablo del Deathmatcho — *Quake III Arena*! Aaaand, in the other corner, brought to us from the digital mystery mobile, the challenger to the throne, the Ambassador of Assault — unbelievable *Unreal Tournament*!

ROUND 1
Graphics

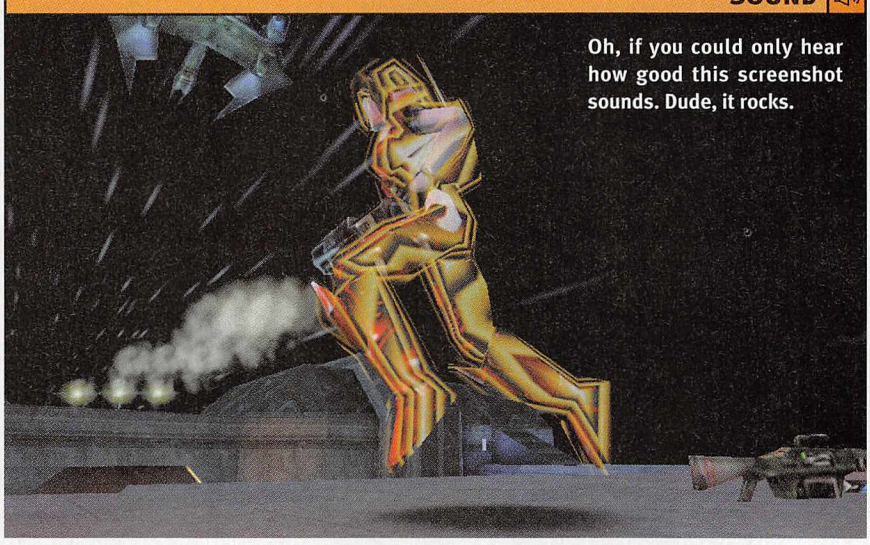
Q3A ···› Fantastic models wrapped in deeply layered earthy textures mesmerize the player, creating a pure deathmatching environment both mentally and physically. As an opener, *Q3A* leads with a hard blow to the adrenal glands. Ouch.

UT ···› With its smorgasbord of sizzling special effects, *UT* dazzles with glowing shrapnel, exploding rings of energy, and weapons so detailed you could almost pull them out of the screen and field dress them. Plus, there's vast outdoor scenarios.

IN THE CORNERS ···› It's like watching Bruce Lee take on Captain America. They both go round for round, not giving an inch, while spectators hold their breaths in awe and pride.

EDGE ···› No clear winner

SOUND



Oh, if you could only hear how good this screenshot sounds. Dude, it rocks.

ROUND 2
Sound

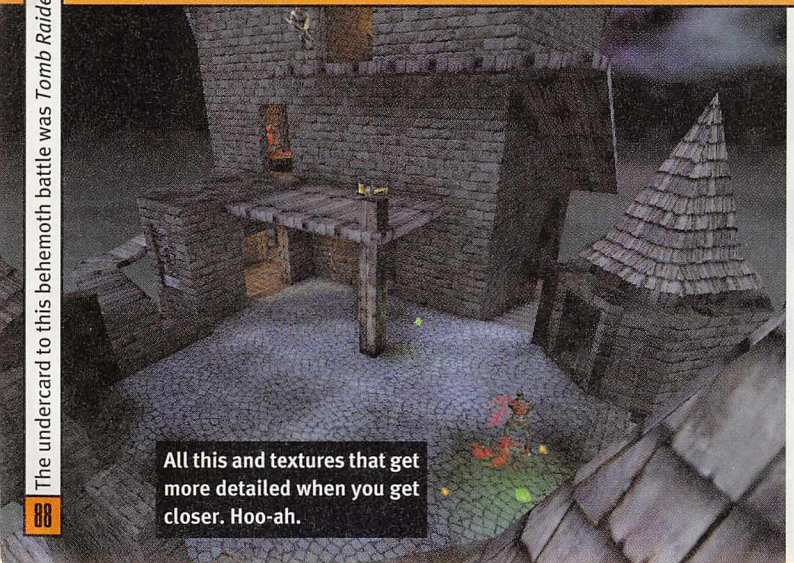
Q3A ···› The Spartan soundscape does its duty to stay done — no more, no less. The rumbling of the rockets and variety of grunts and screams from each combatant suits the scene and holds you by the ears while it pounds into your head.

UT ···› A sound for everything and everything sounds good. The weapon reload effects, radio chatter, and humming and beeping levels constantly alert you to what's going on, while simultaneously conveying a feeling of being *there*.

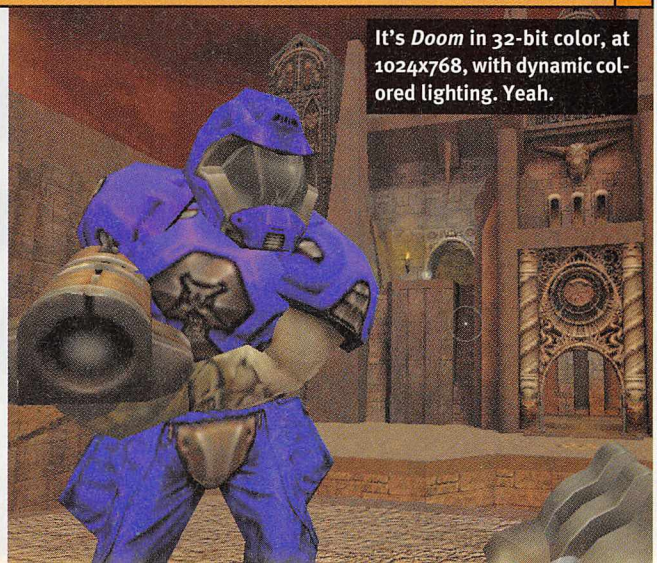
IN THE CORNERS ···› Though *Q3A*'s moves have worked in the past, *UT* practiced them when it was a kid and countered them with its ample supply of style.

EDGE ···› *Unreal Tournament*

GRAPHICS



All this and textures that get more detailed when you get closer. Hoo-ah.



It's *Doom* in 32-bit color, at 1024x768, with dynamic colored lighting. Yeah.

The undercard to this behemoth battle was *Tomb Raider TLR* vs. *Indiana Jones* — but nobody really cared

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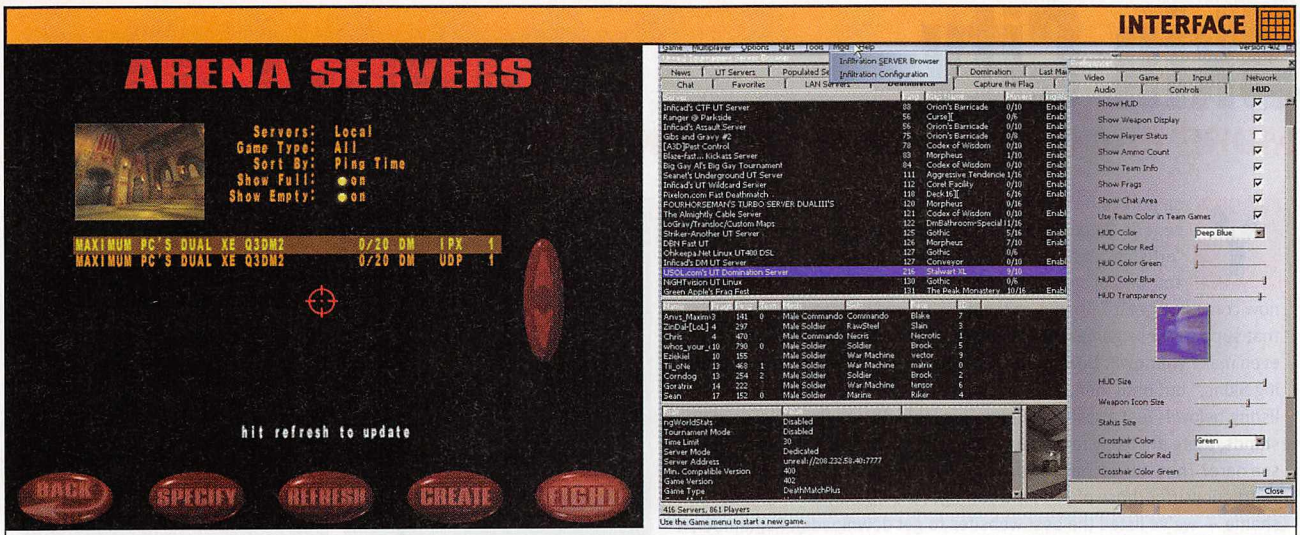

On the left, the Nintendo-player's interface ... to the right, the Windows geek interface.

ROUND 3
Interface

Q3A ···› So simple a child could navigate it. With basic menus that shoot you right to the game, it's clear what the designer wanted to offer — instant action.

UT ···› Piled high with options, the game would be bewildering were it not for the functional default settings. The server browser is so laden with information, that picking a good server is a snap. Toss in total HUD customizability and you've got *Braveheart*-style freedom goin' on.

IN THE CORNERS ···› Dogmatic as *Q3A* plays it, *UT* sees every option and delivers twice that number. *Q3A* goes down on one knee.

EDGE ···› *Unreal Tournament*

ROUND 4
Community

Q3A ···› The hoards of *Quake* fiends who live, sleep, and eat id compose a frightening fanbase so devoted it makes God jealous. They're cranking out the mods, painting skin after skin, and churning material into a maelstrom of *Quake* websites.

UT ···› It connects users through a built-in IRC chat channel right in the game, sports strong support from fansites, and, unlike its first incarnation (*Unreal*), there are mods aplenty in development now.

IN THE CORNERS ···› Although *UT*'s fans are loud, *Q3A*'s fans are legion — and they have *Quake* lifestyle flowing through their veins. The roar of the *Quake* crowd makes *UT* bleed from the ears.

EDGE ···› *Quake III Arena*

ROUND 5
Technology

Q3A ···› Forged from the programming might of John Carmack himself, the *Quake III* engine produces not only detailed environments, but brings along the tightest network code in the industry. Impatient FPS fans who remember *Half-Life* springing from *Quake II*'s loins dig their nails into their desks awaiting games based on this tried and true winner.

UT ···› More flexible than a jellified gypsy contortionist, *UT* does levels big and small, accepts "mutators" with the greatest of ease, and comes with UnrealEd — the same map editing tool the developers use.

IN THE CORNERS ···› *UT* comes out swinging with an UnrealEd to the head, but in the long run gets tangled up in an Unreal script error and goes down.

EDGE ···› *Quake III Arena*

THE
Winner is:

Rocket for rocket, these two titans worked their powerful features against each other in a tooth-cracking battle we won't soon forget. It became clear in the sixth round that *Quake III* wasn't in the deathmatch arena anymore and being stripped of the element that won it the **PCXL** Game of the Year award — Pure Deathmatch Fun — it was at a major disadvantage. Eventually, it went all the way to the finish and despite beleaguered cries of "Fixed!" from spectators, *Unreal Tournament* took the belt.

The Golden Syringe

From the sidelines, one voice was louder than the rest — that of Mike Salmon. His "reasoning" for why *Quake III* is better earned him a new award, even more prestigious than the Golden Crackpipe: The Golden Syringe.

"It's more expensive, it's got to be better!"
"More is not always better"
"It doesn't confuse you with choices"
"Have you seen the box?"

***UT* has a "to scale" model of the Mile High Club executive offices.**

In Mike Salmon's defense — he is always right (or so he keeps telling us)

Skin City

MORE PROOF THAT BEAUTY *IS* SKIN DEEP

You gots to be comfortable in your skin! Playing as any of the generic *Quake III* or *UT* characters is just so uncool. The true "artistes" of the gaming community know that a DM-er with any kind of style gets a skin that screams, "This is me, bitch – now come and get it!" Thanks to the growing and talented communities that support these games, new skins come out every day. Hell, you can even make your own. Next month we'll give you "The Idiot's Guide to Making Skins," but until then, you can still try on some new skins. The brief listing below is just a taste of what is available. By the time this issue hits stands, there are likely to be many, many more choices. Like a skin you see here? Then all you have to do is access our CD and follow the simple instructions (for those of you who don't get the CD edition — shame, shame — we've listed the best websites to get downloads). Remember, it isn't how good you are, it's how good you look. And with these new skins, you'll look mahvelous dahling, simply mahvelous.

Quake III

Captain Major Wedgie

AUTHOR ···› foGGee125
AVAILABLE AT ···› www.planetquake.com/polycount (or the **PCXL** disc)
THE SKINNY ···› According to the author's description, "Major Wedgie. A real American hero. Wanted to fight in the Stroggos affair, but couldn't due to a spastic colon condition." Overall it's a pretty decent model, and it's always good to play a character with a spastic colon condition.
BONUS ···› The almost comic look to the character really stands out — of course, that can be bad when you are trying to avoid drawing undue attention to yourself.

Scotty Fox

AUTHOR ···› Scotty
AVAILABLE AT ···› www.planetquake.com/polycount (or the **PCXL** disc)
THE SKINNY ···› This goofy looking fox is actually an update of a popular *Quake II* skin. This Vulpine Mountie extraordinaire (that's what the author called him – don't blame us) is easily the funniest *Q3* model we've seen.
BONUS ···› You could call yourself QuickBrownFox and have a friend call himself LazyDog, then you could jump over him.

PMS

AUTHOR ···› Paul Steed
AVAILABLE AT ···› www.planetquake.com/polycount (or the **PCXL** disc)
THE SKINNY ···› This bodacious beauty was crafted by Id Software's very own Paul Steed. He created this skin especially for our monthly-visitor-challenged foes at Clan PMS. Word has it that every 28 days he'd get some really bitchy phone calls, until he finally gave in. Then again, we might have made that last bit up. Overall, this is an extremely professional and sexy model. Even better than some of the skins that come with the game.
BONUS ···› People will think you are in Clan PMS and will be really scared of you.

Unreal Tournament

Femme Fatale: Cat

AUTHOR ···› RawDeal
AVAILABLE AT ···› www.unrealityorg (or the **PCXL** disc)
THE SKINNY ···› She is very naked and a little too detailed. We have concerns with some of the artistic license taken with a certain nether region we aren't showing here.
BONUS ···› Most *UT* players have never seen a naked woman — use this to your advantage.

INSTALLING SKINS

Most skins come with their own readme.txt, but to make it easier for the simple people of the world (and because no one actually reads readme files) here's a quick guide.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT
STEP 1 ···› Download skin pack from the web (or on the CD-ROM)
STEP 2 ···› Extract the .int files to the system folder (in the *Unreal* folder)
STEP 3 ···› Extract the .utx files into the textures folder (in the *Unreal* folder)
STEP 4 ···› If you want to run a server and want others to see your skin, then open the UnrealTournament.ini file (in the Unreal/System folder) and under the heading engine.game engine place the appropriate command (ex: server packages = soldierskins_captainamerica). The command line changes depending on the skin you install.
STEP 5 ···› Hop on server and flaunt your new skin because you *are* the man

QUAKE 3 ARENA
STEP 1 ···› Download skin pack from the web (or on the CD-ROM)
STEP 2 ···› Create a folder in baseq3 (in *Q3* directory) called models
STEP 3 ···› Create a folder in models called players
STEP 4 ···› Create a folder in players called [name of character here]. Put files in this folder
STEP 5 ···› Go to character select screen and pick out your new skin

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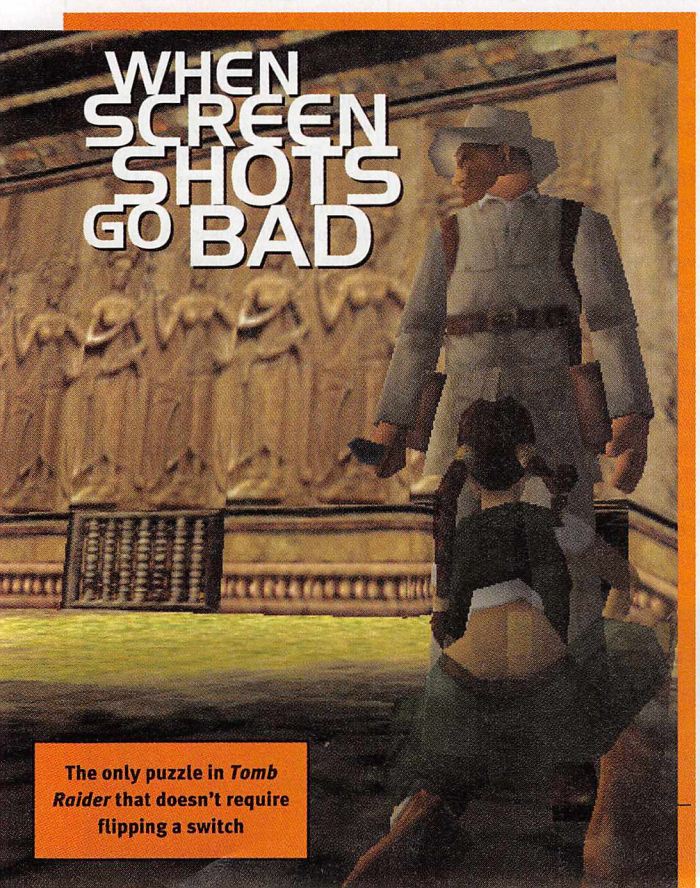
The most frustrating part of getting a new skin is that the server has to have the skin or nobody can see it

SWAT

AUTHOR ···› Eclypse
AVAILABLE AT ···› www.unrealityity.org (or the **PCXL** disc)
THE SKINNY ···› Isn't really very funny, but the model is extremely cool looking and well done. Plus it beats the hell out the generic models in *UT*.
BONUS ···› Say "Hut, Hut" often to annoy enemies.

Captain America

AUTHOR ···› Ian Threadgold
AVAILABLE AT ···› www.unrealityity.org/painfuldetail/ (or on the **PCXL** disc)
THE SKINNY ···› One of the many Marvel superhero skins available for *UT*, Captain America is, in our opinion, the best of them. This guy's got amazing detail and is generally pretty cool.
BONUS ···› You can say, "Assemble Avengers" and do other corny superhero stuff.



The only puzzle in *Tomb Raider* that doesn't require flipping a switch

ONLINE NUISANCE

There aren't any gamers in the world who take their pathetic existence more seriously than those in the world of massively multiplayer games. This makes them the perfect targets for some especially annoying tricks. After all, if you aren't messing with people's minds in a multiplayer game, then why even play multiplayer? This month we took to the land of Dereth to pester, confuse, and annoy the bold adventurers in *Asheron's Call*

MAKE THEM YOUR BITCH

WHAT IT IS ···› Why use a pyramid scheme Allegiance system if you can't use it to make people your bitches? When approaching low-level characters about being your humble servant, make sure you humble them properly. Say something like, "I will give you weapons and armor if you swear allegiance to me, wear only pink clothing, kneel in my presence, and always address me as 'Big Poppa'"
WHY IT'S ANNOYING ···› You get to use your power to belittle people into feeling like weak, useless peons. It's pretty much the same thing your boss does to you at work

NOW YOU SEE 'EM, NOW YOU DON'T

WHAT IT IS ···› Join a server as one character — let's say Gia. Then go into town and ask if anyone has seen Mike. Now log off and join in as Mike, wander the town asking if anyone has seen Gia. Repeat this process until the whole town is searching high and low for your missing partner. You'll get lots of, "I just saw him two minutes ago, follow me" — and you'll laugh heartily
WHY IT'S ANNOYING ···› Nobody in the world is more helpful than a massively multiplayer gamer. By using this against them you can interrupt hours of their pitiful existence for your own puerile enjoyment

THE LOST QUAKER

WHAT IT IS ···› Always speak like a *Quake* Marine that was somehow lost in the land of Dereth. Say things like, "This sucks! I can't find the quad damage anywhere," and "I'll trade this sword thingy for a rocket launcher — any takers?"
WHY IT'S ANNOYING ···› You sound really stupid and ruin the mood of medieval RPG. Plus it reminds these pour lost souls of the games they should be playing

SHADOW GAMES

WHAT IT IS ···› Make a really fast character and pick out a mid-level character at random (or one with the most annoying name). Now follow them everywhere they go and constantly say nonsensical things to them like "Hey dude, can you tell me what happened on 'Felicity' last night?" or "Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream (repeat)." Also occasionally bring a train to them to really annoy them. Finally, when they beg you to leave them alone, make them give you money or magic items
WHY IT'S ANNOYING ···› There's nothing worse than someone following you everywhere and bringing in unwanted attackers at inopportune times. The chatter alone is annoying enough

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Osmer D'vere says, "STOP IT NOW!!!
```

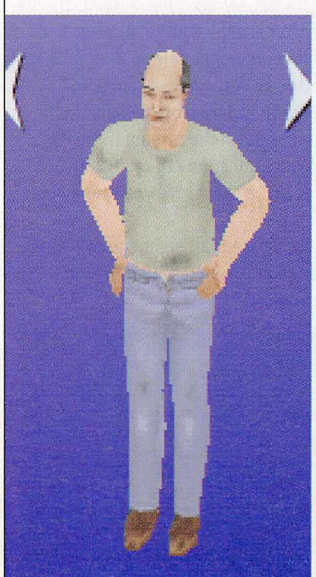
AT HOME WITH ... THE Simpranos

SCINTILLATING, CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED TELEVISION RIGHT ON YOUR OWN DESKTOP

You eat baked ziti every night. You tell your girlfriend to "f—k off and stop bustin' my balls" and think "Oh, poor you" is a helluva funny comeback. "The Sopranos" has taken over your life, but a handful of new episodes a year doesn't satisfy your jones for this dysfunctional crime family. Do what we did and create your own ongoing mob drama using *The Sims*. Here's how to get it done:

Connect The Bots

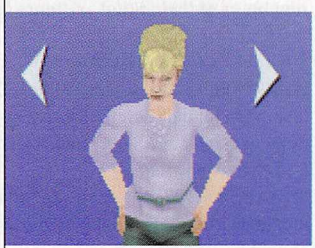
Start your family of Simpranos by creating the boss, Tony Simprano. Tony's not exactly a nice guy, so go easy on the Nice points when creating his personality (we gave three). He's also a bit of a fat-ass and machismo prevents him from picking up after himself, so he only gets three Active points and two Neat points. Tony is, however, damned outgoing when whackin' guys who get in his way and pretty playful (if you know what we mean) with the babes down at Badabing's, so set those traits much higher (we gave seven and six bars respectively), leaving a few unused points at the bottom. Select a balding head and a suitably rotund body from the list of choices, and you're ready to begin your life of crime.



We dare you to tell Tony that his fly is undone.

Married To The Mob

Creating wife Carmella is even easier than making our made man, Tony. On the whole, she's even-keeled and her personality should show that. Give her 5 Neat points (she's a broad, remember), 4 Outgoing, 6 Active, 4 Playful, and 6 Nice. There's a perfect blonde beehive head and tight-fitting Capri pantsuit body for finalizing your Carmella Simprano.



Carmella Simprano: Rrrow!

Filling Out The Brood

Given that your Sim family starts out with a measly 20 Grand, our strategy is to play "The Simpranos: The Early Years" with only Tony and Carmella and let them have their own Tony Jr. and Meadow, but if you've gotta have the entire family now, here's how:

MEADOW ···› Meadow encompasses that bratty-as-a-kid but built-like-an-adult-actress gray area, so we opted to give her an adult's body, but treat her like a child (just like Tony does). Unfortunately, there's no "whiny" personality trait, but you can still create a credible Meadow by doling out points like this: 4 Neat, 6 Outgoing, 5 Active, 3 Playful, and 5 Nice. Choose the appropriate head/dress combo and you've got yourself a dead-ringer.

"Bitch, I'm hungry! Get in there and fix me some damn eggs!" says Tony. Don't worry, Carmella will cry and then they'll "make up."

ANTHONY JR. ···› Tony Jr. can best be described as a live-action Bobby Hill, but without the charisma. Simply put, he doesn't have much personality and your Sim should reflect that with a paltry two personality points in each category. None of the kid's heads really look that much like him, so get creative.

Full House

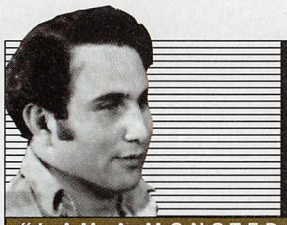
We know Tony is The Boss, but all Sims start out at the bottom and work their way up, so don't be too proud to buy a cheap house in the beginning. Besides, you can always buy or make a bigger one later in the game. When furnishing your house, make sure to purchase a cheapie computer since that'll be the quickest way to find a job in the crime career track. When an offer comes in to become a pickpocket, grab it. Common larceny might not be glamorous, but everyone has to start somewhere.

The Old Neighborhood

As time passes, you might want to add on to your neighborhood and create some supporting characters. Two possible houses to make are Ma Soprano's next door home and Tony's hangout, Badabings (download the slot machine patch from *The Sims* website at www.thesims.com first). Fill Badabing's with Pussy (upper and lower cases) and the rest of the goodfellas, so Tony will drop by for "business." Ma's house should come with Ma and Tony's sister. (It's impossible to make vindictive, bedridden biddies, but you might be able to fake it by setting all personality levels except Outgoing to 0.)

Give it a few weeks, the equivalent of about a season's worth of episodes, and "The Simpranos" will give you some must-play PC action every night of the week. Now get outta here!

Last season, "The Sopranos" was nominated for 16 Emmys, more than any other cable program in history www.DailyRadar.com



STAY AWAY FROM ...

"I AM A MONSTER. I AM THE SON OF SIM"

By the time you read this, there will be a million other strategies in magazines and websites that will tell you how to create the perfect Sim-yuppie, how to advance your career, get married, and have children — but not in PCXL. Here we hope to offer some very different tips that'll help you enjoy your games even more. For example, did you know that you could be a happy, well-adjusted serial killer? Here are six steps to being a virtual psychopath. (Just don't take this seriously in any way — please!)

The Killer

You can create any kind of killer you want, but we found that making him look as close to the real thing really adds to the game. Generally speaking, serial killers are intelligent, white, heterosexual males who hold down good jobs and live alone. As for personality traits in your Sim, we've found that you must possess a relatively nice and outgoing Sim in order to lure ... uhh ... invite over your potential victims. So make a well-balanced character for starters. And for looks, we find that this particular combination of traits is really eerie, but to each their own. Obtaining a chess board and a book case to increase logic makes for the perfect mind of a killer.

When he's not killing Sims, Bob reads the paper to relax.

The Career

It doesn't seem to matter what career you pick in *The Sims*, but criminals and the police work the best hours (tend to work at night, leaving the daytime for prowling) to support your "hobby." Whatever your career, try not to miss work, and try to advance in salary, because any serious serial killer will eventually need a larger lair for his victims.

The Lair

The key to a good killer in *The Sims* is the perfect abode. The house we've created is big, clean, and has a maze of walls which Bob uses to confuse his victims. If the house gets messy and the killings get sloppy then it'll be hard to get other Sims over to visit.

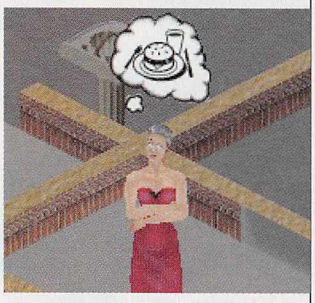
Bob's house of death awaits. Behind the comfortable "single guy" pad lays the trappings of one f—ked up dude.

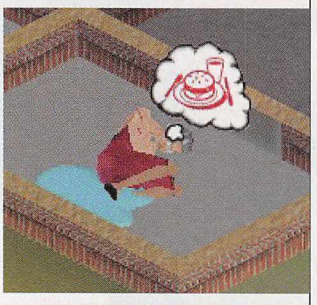
The Kill

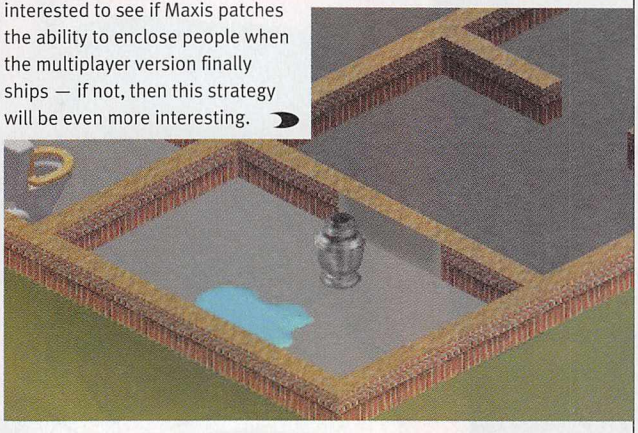
Learn a lesson from Ted Bundy and understand that kindness is the best weapon a serial killer can possess. A friendly, outgoing Sim will befriend (and even seduce) as many Sims as possible, then one at a time lure them back into his house. Once you get them into the chamber, switch to build mode, and lock them in. Continue your daily life (job, social, etc.) as the poor Sim slowly starves to death in a pool of its own urine. Watching them die is quite unpleasant, but you're the one that wanted to be a serial killer. Sicko.

The Victims

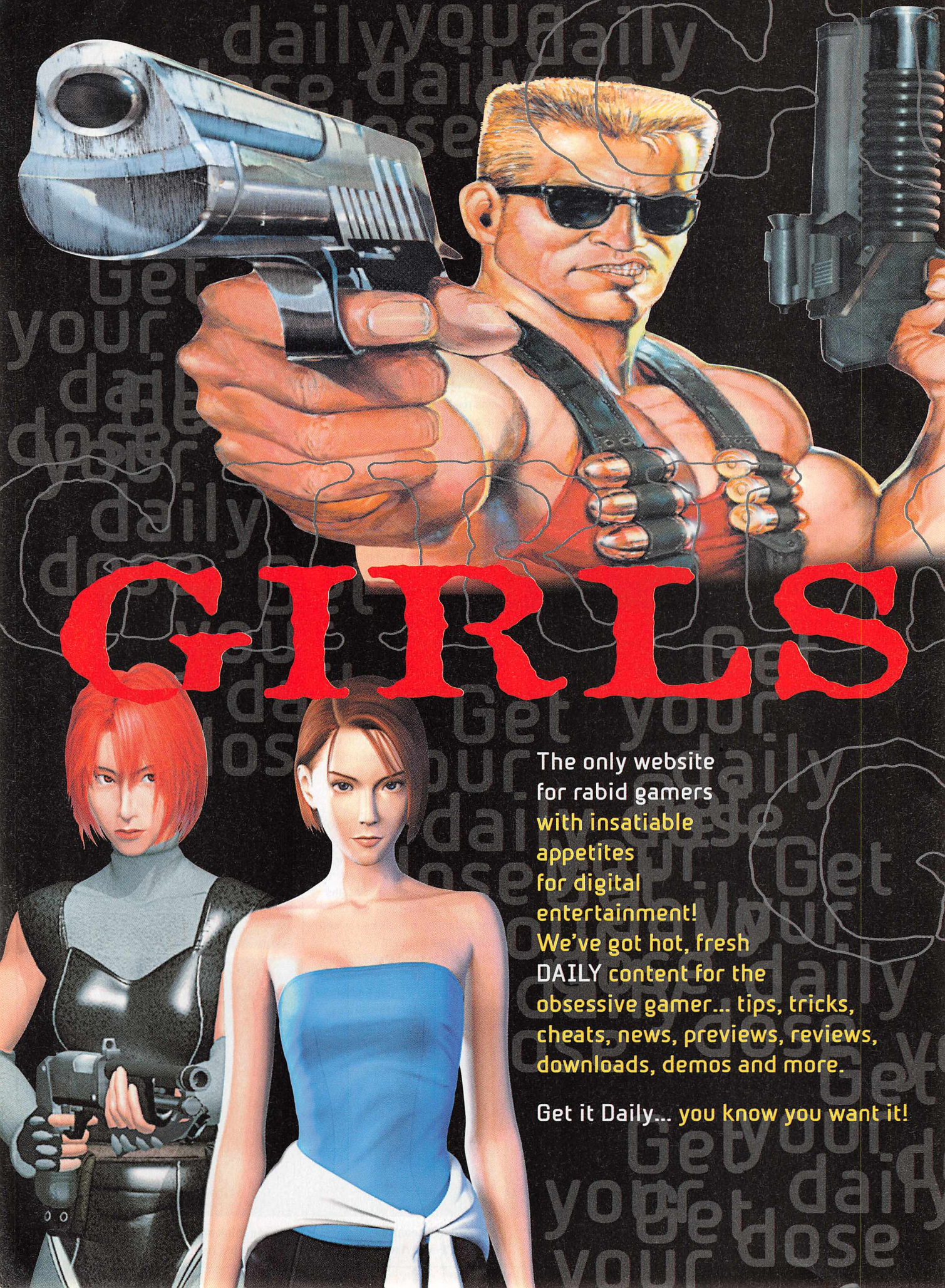
You can go for pretty much anyone in your neighborhood, and eventually you'll have to start up new houses so you can make new "friends." When creating victims you should make them very nice and outgoing so it will be easier to pull off the kills. We'll be very interested to see if Maxis patches the ability to enclose people when the multiplayer version finally ships — if not, then this strategy will be even more interesting.







This whole scenario is really sick when you think about it. In fact, you don't even have to think about it to know it's really sick.


GIRLS
The only website for rabid gamers with insatiable appetites for digital entertainment! We've got hot, fresh DAILY content for the obsessive gamer... tips, tricks, cheats, news, previews, reviews, downloads, demos and more.
Get it Daily... you know you want it!

GUNS
Get your Daily dose
GORE
www.DailyRadar.com
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Area Sim Murdered

GRISLY SCENE SHOCKS RESIDENTS

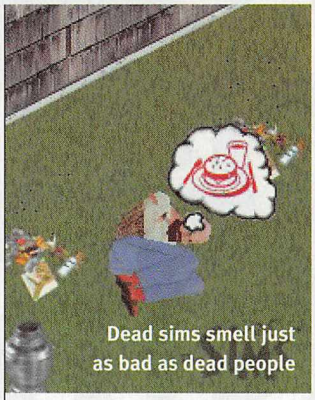
Bob Default, 30, of 1469 Sim Lane, was found dead yesterday trapped inside a brick enclosure located in the deceased's front yard. The cause of death was determined to be starvation, however foul play is strongly suspected.

"The victim was apparently trapped inside the structure by person or persons unknown," announced SimPolice Sergeant Player at a press conference today. "There are no leads at this time, but we urge the community to remain indoors until this vicious killer is found."

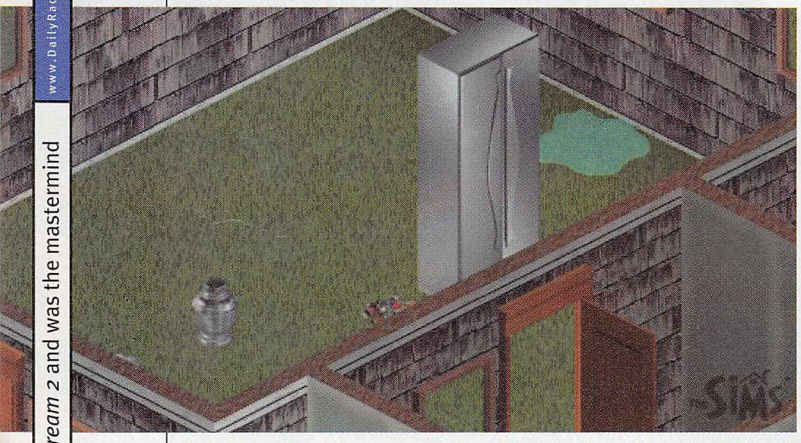
It's believed that Default was on the way to meet his morning carpool four days ago when he was suddenly bricked inside the mysterious structure. Stuck without food or water, Default slowly withered and died, only to be discovered three days later by his two children, Jane, 6, and Doe, 4. His wife, Sue, was estranged from Default at the time of death and pursuing a romantic relationship with next door neighbor Ms. Lezzlie Honeypot. Neither Mrs. Default or Ms. Honeypot are suspects in the murder, say police.

Default, a newly hired security guard at SimTech Industries, had moved to town a few weeks before his murder. Co-workers were shocked by the news: "He always showed up on time, did his work, and went home. Bob had a great future in law enforcement ahead of him," said Phil Anonymous, Default's boss. "He was such a kidder, always juggling or offering back massages. My affection level for him was quite high."

In a city where the worst crime to date has been an unexplained arson fire two months ago, police are baffled as to who could possibly have perpetrated such a diabolical murder. "But," avows Sergeant Player "mark my words, we will catch this killer. He'll tip his hand eventually, and when he does ... we got 'im."



Dead sims smell just as bad as dead people



Neighbor Jeffrey Dahmer says he didn't see "anything suspicious."

THE POWER METER

Someone at PCXL is writing this, so please read it so they don't feel completely useless. ***[Ed.-Too late.]***

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	
1	1	**MICROSOFT** ···› The list of potential hits gets longer, with *MechWarrior 4* to be announced soon.
2	-	**MAXIS** ···› *The Sims* is going to sell millions. And *SimMars* is in the works — expect to see them top the sales charts this fall.
3	9	**BLIZZARD** ···› We've seen *Diablo II* and sure, it's late, but it's really going to be worth the wait.
4	5	**ACTIVISION** ···› Despite disappointments (*I-82*, *Hidden Evil*, *Battlezone 2*), there's still plenty of potential in the works over there.
5	7	**INTERPLAY** ···› Those AD&D RPGs are great, and that helps assuage *Messiah*'s continual slipping. *Klingon Academy*, *MDK2*, and *Giants* all show promise.
6	-	**VERANT** ···› While *Everquest* doesn't dominate our time anymore, the probability of a Star Trek MMRPG (to be published by Activision in 2002) and the possibility of a Star Wars MMRPG ensures Verant's position.
7	3	**RED STORM** ···› What's next for *Rainbow Six*? We don't know yet, and while *Shadow Watch* has originality, the company needs new avenues for growth.
8	4	**HASBRO** ···› The success of *Rollercoaster Tycoon* hides a company lacking many other quality titles. There's only so many times you can re-release *Space Invaders* and *Pong* sequels.
9	8	**SIERRA** ···› *TF2*, *Half-Life 2*, *Tribes 2* are all in the hopper, but right now there's the uninspiring *Ground Control* and *Arcanum*. And that's it.
10	2	**EIDOS** ···› Still to be confirmed as a genuine contender, company Prez Rob Dyer's gloomy prediction of the PC's demise can't help morale. Still, great titles are in production.

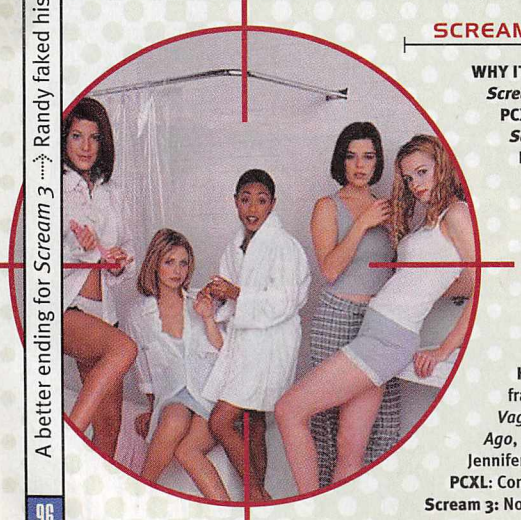
OTHER CONTENDERS

3DO ···› Solid brands helped post good results for Trip Hawkins' company, but it's yet to break through with a real quality original title.

TALONSOFT ···› Farming eastern European talent is good, but one hit (*Hidden and Dangerous*) doesn't ensure long term success. *Flying Heroes* won't be huge, but other up-and-comers have potential.

FANTASY FRAG

SCREAM 3



WHY IT SHOULD BE FRAGGED ···› [phone rings]
***Scream 3*:** [answers] Hello?
PCXL: [scary voice] *Do you want to be fragged?*
***Scream 3*:** Wh ... who is this?
PCXL: The first *Scream* was hip and scary, but now you've turned into what you were mocking in the first place — schlock
***Scream 3*:** NO! I'm the best one yet ...
PCXL: *SHUT UP, BITCH!* You killed off Randy and your creator spawned "Dawson's Creek." That *can't* be forgiven.
***Scream 3*:** [panics] Where are you?
PCXL: I'll give you one hint, sweetcheeks ... *not* at the theater.

HOW HE SHOULD BE FRAGGED ···› *Scream 3* runs frantically, but crashes into the mutilated cast of *I Vaguely Remember What You Did Three Summers Ago*, screams, and trips over the shapely left bosom of Jennifer Love Hewitt. A figure approaches.
PCXL: Consider yourself direct-to-video.
Scream 3: Noooooooooooo ... [death rattle]

Every so often on our website, we frag whatever the heck makes us angry, and occasionally we frag something just because it needs it. Find out what we fragged recently on www.pcxl.com. You'll come for the frags, but you'll stay for the ***CRAZY NEWS AND THE BABES.***

A better ending for *Scream 3* ···› Randy faked his death in *Scream 2* and was the mastermind

www.DailyRadar.com

NEWS BRIEFS

Game Maker looking for ... game makers

Los Angeles-based Heavy Iron Studios looks to put their mark on the gaming world by securing the license to create the *Evil Dead* game. Only one problem ... no one at Heavy Iron really knows how to make games. A recent advertisement for help indicated that the up and coming developer needs a 3D Modeler, a 2D artist, a Renderman TD, a System Administrator, and a Senior Game Programmer. Apparently the company already has a very proficient Coffee Boy, and wants to build around his vision. Our hopes of seeing something on *Evil Dead* sometime before the real beginning of the millennium are looking dim.

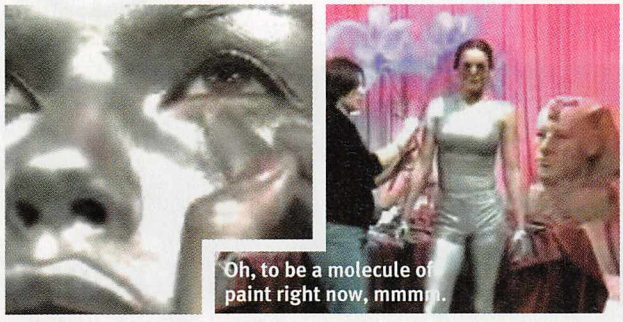
Silly Developers To Give Successful Game a Sequel

BioWare is currently hard at work on *Baldur's Gate II*, but in a recent interview Ben Smedstad (*BG III* producer) revealed some shocking news, "If *Baldur's Gate II* does well financially, and people enjoy it and want to buy it, then we'd be silly not to do another one." We immediately sent sources throughout the industry to find out if BioWare is, in fact, silly. According to one unidentified source, "Oh, those guys are silly. Damn silly if you ask me." Other reports indicated that, while BioWare can be silly, they aren't silly in a stupid way.

The only information known about *Baldur's Gate III* is that the title will contain a colon and some nonsensical phrase that contains the word "shadow" or "dark." For further news that will have no bearing on your life be sure to check **PCXL**.

Lara Gets New Skin

To celebrate the release of *Tomb Raider III* on PlayStation's mid-price platinum range, the real-life Lara Croft model, Lara Weller, was body painted from head to toe live on the web. This constitutes the biggest graphical change ever in the *Tomb Raider* series.



Oh, to be a molecule of paint right now, mmmm.

Related?

Our roving **PCXL** reporters recently found the following news tidbits, and noticed a strange connection among our very own staffers ...

Scientists Clone Monkey
— **PCXL** replaces Ed Lee

Methodists investigate pastors who presided over lesbian wedding
— **PCXL** investigates lesbian activity whenever possible

Disgruntled AOL 5.0 users seek up to $8 billion in damages
— Umm, we want some too. Yeah.

Border arrests, prosecutions setting records in Arizona
— **PCXL** staff accountants consult with Kathy Lee Gifford on cutting costs of magazine production

Secretive Game Revealed

DESTINED TO "REVOLUTIONIZE GAMING," SAY EXPERTS

On the fast-paced world of game development, new projects come and go. Most are variations on a theme, like first-person shooter, realtime strategy, or simulation, and many of these wannabe's never make it past the concept stage. Indigo Labs, a much beleaguered Silicon Valley start-up, promises to break the rules with an advanced game model unlike anything you've ever seen before.

"The secret behind Project HairPie is a revolutionary new Environmentally Alterable Tracking and Motion Engine ("EAT-ME") that allows players to affect any and all objects in the game environment," notes Project HairPie Lead Designer and Indigo Labs founder Dan Edwards. While similar technology was attempted with *Prey*, now on indefinite hiatus, Edwards insists that Project HairPie's engine is adaptable and not the result of programming "hacks."

Project HairPie (the current codename will likely change before release and was chosen at random with "a dart, a dictionary, and a daiquiri," jokes Indigo staff) is a fantasy/action-adventure game starring Muffy, a furry beaver forced to protect her native land of Vulva from invading creatures. A "fluid perspective" keeps the action alternating from first-person to third-person angles. It might sound like kid stuff, but Indigo insists Project HairPie will be for older players as well.

"About every 26 game days, Muffy transports directly to the invader's homeland and goes on the offensive," says Edwards. "Planning for these short missions requires lots of strategy, time management, and resource juggling. Project HairPie has a lot going for it."

If Project HairPie does ship — a release date is set for Christmas 2000 — it will be the first Indigo Labs product to make it to store shelves. Recounts Edwards, "*Snatch-A-Rama*, *Double Amputee Race*, *Farts The Epileptic Frog* ... We couldn't find publishers for any of them. It's a fickle market." For whatever reason, the Entertainment Software Ratings Board has come down hard on Indigo Labs, consistently slapping their games with an Adults Only rating. "It's ludicrous," insists Edwards," these are *not* violent games."

Despite these serious concerns, gamers, specifically teen males, are anxious to get their hot hands on Project HairPie. (Curiously, the project has met with a chilly reception from female gamers.) But, if what we've seen so far is a sign of things to come, and development on Project HairPie stays on schedule, HairPie will be on everyone's lips come Christmas.

OFFICE QUOTES

"I LIKE THE PART ABOUT THE ENGINE, BUT THE REST IS JUST STUPID."
— Rob Smith on the Project HairPie news story

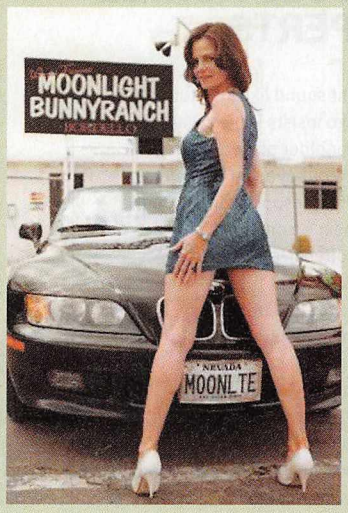
"THE PART ABOUT MUFFY THE BEAVER IS KINDA FUNNY, BUT EVERYTHING ELSE JUST PROVES WE'RE JUVENILE."
— Mike Salmon on the Project HairPie news story

"THAT'S WHY IT'S SO PERFECT."
— Chuck Osborn, vainly defending the Project HairPie story

GameScan

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... ?

Games come and go faster than seedy hookers in "da industry" (as we like to call it when we're trying — and failing — to impress the babes) so when one falls through the cracks we find it, slap it around a little, and tell its sad, sordid story.



AMEN: THE AWAKENING

Developer ···› Cavedog

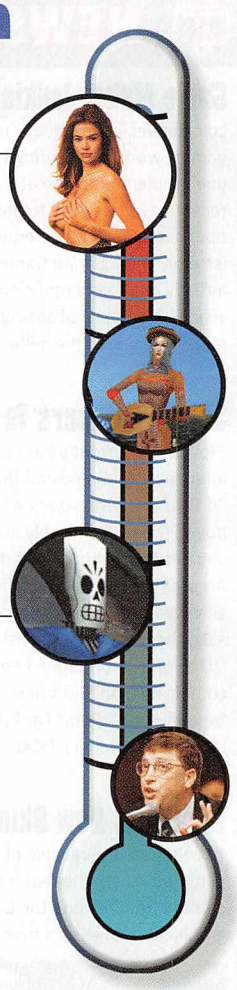
Publisher ···› GT Interactive

The Story ···› *Amen* wowed audiences at last year's E3 with its mind-blowing graphics. Sometime in the mid-21st century, *The Awakening* turns a third of the world's population into wild-eyed killers. His family dead, British commando Bishop 6 is the only man who can save the world from itself.

Status ···› Cavedog pulled a *Prey* and cancelled *Amen* in early January despite enthusiastic press. Saying that the game had "fallen significantly behind schedule," Cavedog decided to focus on the *Total Annihilation* series. After all, it's cheaper to keep a franchise going than start a new one.

The Heat-O-Meter

THE TINSELTOWN EDITION



WHAT'S HOT

QUAKE'N, NOT STIRRED ···› James Bond-ites can shake and stir on the PC now that EA announced plans to use the *Quake III* engine in bringing *The World Is Not Enough* to a hard drive near you. And don't worry Denise Richards fans, her polygonal counterpart acts just as well as the real thing — badly.

THE EVERQUESTING STORY ···› And sometimes games get turned into movies instead. Rumor has it that massively multiplayer RPG *Everquest* is on its way to the big screen courtesy of Sony. We don't know anything about the plot, but we hear that every midget and rat-wrangler in Hollywood has started faxing their resumes.

GEEKS IN SPACE ···› New Star Trek game *Starship Creator: Warp 2* will allow gamers to put pictures of themselves inside the game. Not so coincidentally, doing so will bar them from ever picturing themselves inside a girl.

TURN WOLFENSTEIN ON ···› The granddaddy of all first-person shooters, *Wolfenstein 3D*, is coming back to life with a *Quake III* makeover in the sequel, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*. Between this update and *Mortyr*, 2000 is turning out to be the best year for Nazis since 1942.

WHAT'S COLD

OPPOSING FORCE ···› Singapore temporary banned the sale of *Half-Life* due to its depiction of excessive violence. What were they going to do to people who refuse to stop selling it — cane them?

PURSUING OTHER INTERESTS ···› Tim Schafer, legendary adventure game guru responsible for hits like *Grim Fandango* and *Full Throttle*, has resigned from LucasArts after 10 years of service. It's taken him that long to find the blue keycard.

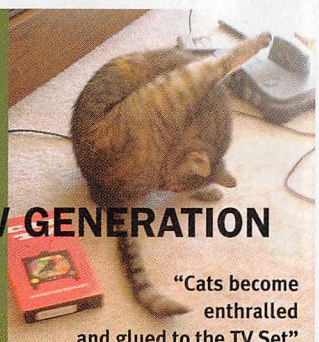
DOIN' THE MICROSOFT SHUFFLE ···› Multi-gazillionaire Bill Gates was replaced by Steve Ballmer as CEO of Microsoft and has moved on to the newly created position of "Chief Software Architect." "God" was already taken.

SIN BAD ···› We've all heard of hit games making the movie transition, but what about flops? Judging from *Sin*, they get turned into a direct-to-video hour-long anime. Too bad Elexis' hidden X-rated hot tub scene won't be included.

WHAT THE HELL?

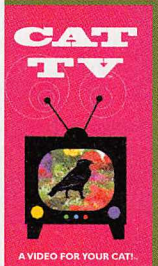
Fun with Pussy

ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE MEOW GENERATION



"Cats become enthralled and glued to the TV Set"

As if cat owners don't have enough crap to buy for their pussies, Jingle Cats Home Video is going beyond the usual catnip contraband, releasing the very first video for cats. "Cat TV" is billed as "a mesmerizing program for felines" where "many wave their paws at the screen, trying to catch the bird, mouse, or fish inside."



Upon viewing, it seems that "Cat TV" is the perfect entertainment for kitties or mind-altered humans. Both real prey and disturbingly fake puppets abound, along with the odd cat-head-in-a-bubble zig-zagging around the screen with *Pong* sounds. This could be the first in a line of tabby-based multimedia, including PC games (eg. *Litterbox Tycoon, Wing Consumer, Mouse Hunter*). But, what do real cats think? **PCXL**'s guest-reviewer, Linnet, shared her thoughts:

0:02 – Subject more interested in box than TV

0:05 – Efforts to point at TV results in subject's fascination with fingers and remote

0:10 – Subject uses litter box. Humans charmed by psychedelic, squawking bird puppet and digitized, mouse-sized cats

0:12 – Subject enters room, licks genitals

1:04 – Tape ends. Subject naps, but humans are oddly enthralled. Will the mouser catch its quarry? Is that puppet a woodpecker or a parrot? There are so many unanswered questions.

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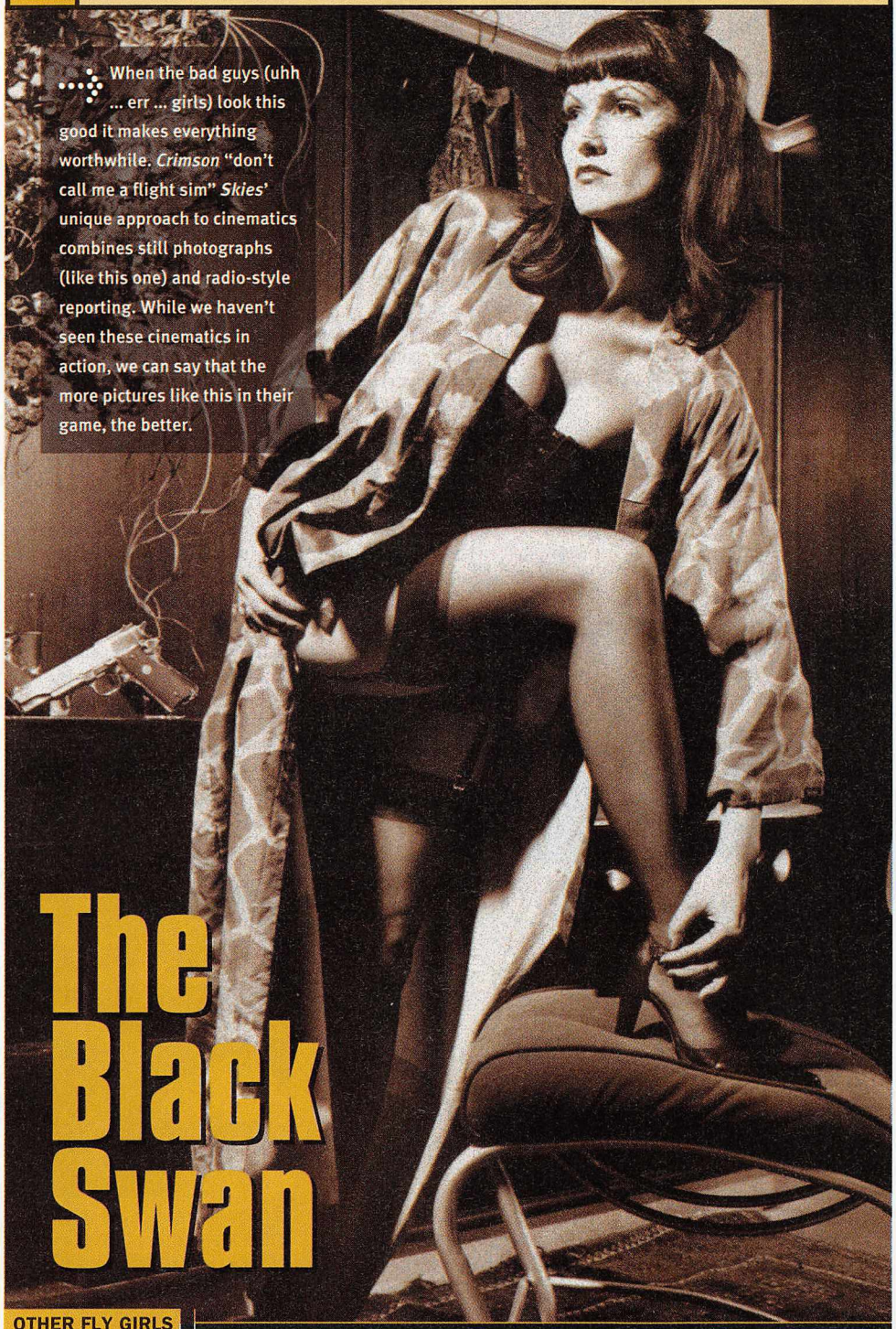
WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY



When the bad guys (uhh ... err ... girls) look this good it makes everything worthwhile. *Crimson* "don't call me a flight sim" *Skies*' unique approach to cinematics combines still photographs (like this one) and radio-style reporting. While we haven't seen these cinematics in action, we can say that the more pictures like this in their game, the better.

The Black Swan

OTHER FLY GIRLS

KELLY McGILLIS

WHY SHE'S FLY ···› *Top Gun*'s civilian instructor got to shoot down Tom Cruise, until he finally took her breath away

JENNIFER LOPEZ

WHY SHE'S FLY ···› One of the original Fly Girls from "In Living Color." Baby did (and still does) have back

KATE MOSS

WHY SHE'S FLY ···› PCXL once compared the stunning graphics in *Fly!* to something she puked up in rehab

GEENA DAVIS

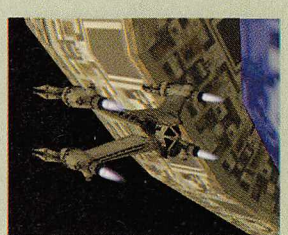
WHY SHE'S FLY ···› Dated *The Fly* and eventually gave birth to the creature's love child

GameScan

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... ?

HIGH NOON

Developer ···› Six Shooter Studios
Publisher ···› TBA
The Story ···› With the exception of *Outlaws*, games set in the Old West (and *Wild Wild West* doesn't count) have been all but nonexistent. *High Noon* is a totally non-linear first-person action/adventure extravaganza using the Lithtech engine. Promising interactive environments and a slew of exciting missions, it could be the new *Half-Life*.
Status ···› Still alive, but shopping for a publisher. Confidence in the project faded when *High Noon*'s website went off-line, but "head honcho" Nathan Dennis assures us development is slow but sure.



BABYLON 5: INTO THE FIRE

Developer ···› Sierra Studios
Publisher ···› Sierra
The Story ···› Based on the TV show, *Babylon 5* is a space combat simulator designed to take advantage of the series' rich history, races, and spacecraft. From what Sierra has showed us, it looked a lot better than anything the Star Trek universe has brought us in quite some time and could've been the start of a new franchise.
Status ···› It's dead, Jim. Due to company-wide restructuring, several games in development, including *Babylon 5*, got the axe. Despite resounding public outcry, a letter-writing campaign, and the futile hope that another publisher would take over the project, the game has remained cancelled.

Wait, we're showing Jennifer Lopez and not featuring her ass? What are we thinking?

GameScan

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... ?

SWORDS AND SORCERY: COME DEVILS, COME DARKNESS

Developer ···› Heuristic Park
Publisher ···› Virgin
The Story ···› Originally set for release in 1998, *Swords And Sorcery* was a RPG licensed from D.W. Bradley, in which a player's party quests to stop an evil High Priest. After Virgin went belly-up, the rights were eventually re-acquired by Heuristic Park.
Status ···› Renamed *Wizards & Warriors*, Heuristic Park is developing with Activision publishing, but otherwise gameplay and story remains virtually the same.

PLANETFALL

Developer ···› Activision
Publisher ···› Activision
The Story ···› Loveable robot sidekick Floyd's resurrection seemed to be on its way a several years ago when Activision announced that it was giving the updated graphic adventure treatment to Infocom classic *Planetfall* (á la the *Zork* series). Even original scribe Steve Meretzky was on board to relaunch the franchise.
Status ···› Unfortunately, after only six months, Meretzky left due to "creative disagreements" and development gradually faded away. A call to Activision confirmed that *Planetfall* is absolutely, undeniably, and truly, dead.

Floyd, the funny robot sidekick in *Planetfall*, died and broke our geeky little hearts (sniff)

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A MOMENT WITH MS. DECARLO

Dear Gia ...

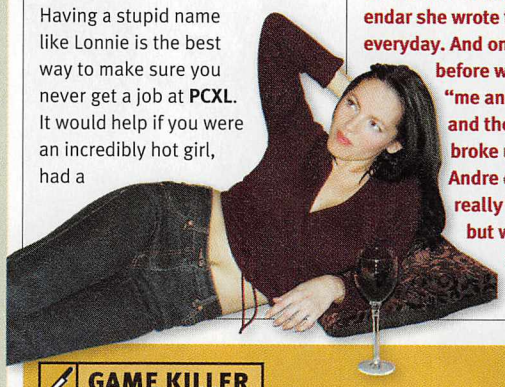
YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS, SHE'S GOT ANSWERS

I've compiled a truckload of e-mails from my adoring (psychotic?) fans. If you want to be ridiculed or publicly humiliated, send me an e-mail (gia@pcxl.com) and I'll see what I can do.

Gia on Careers ...

My name is Lonnie and I was wondering if you could answer a few questions. I just graduated high school and was wondering how to get into a magazine like PCXL, what qualifications you need, or even how you got into it?

Lonnie



Having a stupid name like Lonnie is the best way to make sure you never get a job at **PCXL**. It would help if you were an incredibly hot girl, had a grasp of the English language, and a college education. As for me, one out of three was enough.

Gia on relationships ...

I am in a relationship with this girl that I really love. But lately, we have been really up and down. We broke up about two months ago but got together a month later. The point is, I broke up with her 'cause I can't trust her and just found out my suspicions had reason. She is in Peru right now for two weeks and I am to feed her cat. So being nosy I went through some stuff on her dresser. In a calendar she wrote things down everyday. And on some dates before we broke up I saw "me and Firas did it" and then while we were broke up I saw "me and Andre did it." I am really in love with her, but what do I do? I am really hurt.

Jason

Seems you weren't the only one to "feed her cat." My advice is to stop dating tramps and being so whiny. The only thing worse than cheaters are guys whining about it. Dump the bitch and move on.

Gia on Technical Support ...

Congratulations! This could be the perfect opportunity for you to get a grand tour of the Electronic Arts facilities while also living the dream of going on a date with a sweet and friendly technical support guy. Your dream date will include a chauffered ride in a genuine town car, goodies, a tour of EA including: My cubicle, the testing area, eating facilities, volleyball courts, parking lot, and much, much more. The vast beauty of EA Customer Service and Redwood Shores awaits!

Ron Venosa

Unfortunately, according to my contract, I am not allowed to date perverts within the industry (outside of **PCXL** staffers).

GAME KILLER

Fun with Egger

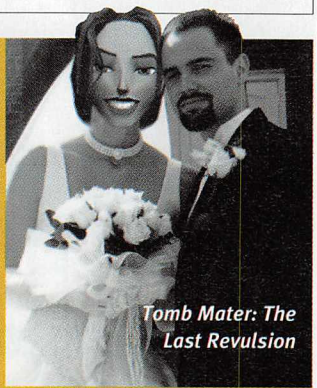
"NO."

Every month, we seek out bad games for destruction. If not the worst, at least ones that deserve it due to sheer mediocrity — like *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*.

Fortunately, Lara met ex-**PCXL** Senior Editor Dan Egger. You may recall several months ago, we discovered that Dan had an unfortunate habit of dating bad games. After much begging and pleading, the (presumably) happy couple were married in a private ceremony. In a secret journal kept by Dan during the trip, we gain an insight into their first few hours of wedding bliss.

The Wedding Night

8:15 PM ···› We checked into the honeymoon suite of the Shangri-la Hotel. Tonight's gonna rock!
8:30 PM ···› Lara wants me to "train" before we get "busy." How can I refuse? She's hot!
9:05 PM ···› I think I'm going to die. First, I jumped off the balcony, dived into a pool, sprung up six flights of stairs, pushed a switch (where the heck did *that* come from?), and leapt across a gorge to our heart-shaped bed.
9:06 PM ···› Lara has a tiny moustache! Feeling slightly nauseous.
9:07 PM ···› Looked down about six inches. Feeling much better.
9:10 PM ···› Touched Lara's knee, but she said "no." Frustrated!
9:25 PM ···› Lara found an ancient Egyptian glyph. We were also attacked by wolves. Hmm ...
10:00 PM ···› Lara finally moaned when she found my first aid kit.
10:05 PM ···› Yes! She's ready.
10:07 PM ···› A quick pull of the lever and we're done. Like all Lara Croft adventures, it didn't take very long.



Tomb Mater: The Last Revulsion

DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

Behind the green orcs

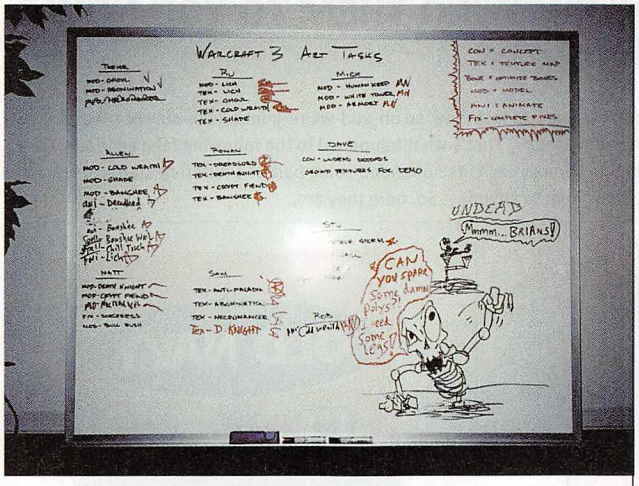
A STORM OF CREATIVITY AT BLIZZARD'S NEW DIGS

You've got to be fairly pleased when you're Blizzard. Certifiably the most successful developer in PC gaming, the Irvine, CA, office is a hit factory (albeit a relatively slow hit factory). While the 100 employees in this plush office are working on *WarCraft III* and (drum-roll, please) a "secret project," keeping a fluid dynamic to let each team create games in their own way is a vital element of the headquarters' layout. Wide corridors would likely be filled with puny cubicles in a Bay Area Internet start-up company — but not here. While the space could certainly house many more people, the spaciousness creates a sense of prosperity, and therefore, confidence throughout the building.

Of course, even Blizzard isn't immune from politics. A start-up that's taken a small part of their two story building complained of Blizzard's staffers' rabble-like smoke breaks and even the sandwich van's daily visits. But that's hardly going to get in the way of folks who, like most developers, work more hours than bank clerks.

It's important that teams have their own space. While some programmers on the *WarCraft III* team have offices, the art staff is in a more open environment. Meetings take place in central areas where large leather couches provide some comfort while the latest design plans are discussed. For most games, designing is an open process. Once the main focus is in place, details are worked out on the suggestion of anyone on staff. Likewise, while some art staff are employed specifically to work on textures, they can branch into modeling and eventually see their side work included in the game.

"Oh, crap, it's PCXL! Who the hell let those bozos in here?"



If you can make any sense of this tasklist for *Warcraft III*, then you too could design a gazillion-selling game series.

As press hacks, we were carefully shepherded away from the "secret project" area. As we approached, a meeting was in progress that was quickly disbanded at the mention of press in the building. We've speculated as to what this project is within the *WarCraft III* feature story, but we weren't able to overhear anything!

Blizzard invested in a nearly completed new sound studio for its Irvine location, composed of two audio studios for voiceover work and two for full music composition. It's been carefully constructed complete with rubberized doors and specially shaped sound proof wall panels (the chair races held on the second floor have to be curtailed during recording sessions). Music for the games will be conducted here rather than in the separate offices (*Diablo II* is being finished at Blizzard North's San Mateo, CA, office).

About 14 people comprise Blizzard's cinematics department. Aside from overall game design, the cutscenes in *Diablo II* will blow you away (Blizzard's opening cinematic for *Diablo II* was eligible for an Academy Award nomination, but failed to get the nod). About 24 minutes of cinematics are included in the game, pushing the story forward between the acts, as well as at important junctures within the story.

With this new facility, Blizzard is incredibly well positioned to stay at the forefront of game design. We'll bring you news of the "secret project" as soon as we uncover it, but you can rest assured that it's going to be as big a deal as every other product this company has produced in the past.

STATUS

- NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES TOTAL ···› 150
- NUMBER OF GAMES IN DEVELOPMENT ···› 3
- REMOTE CONTROLLED CAR OF CHOICE ···› A Mini-Mercedes
- MOST POPULAR OFFICE PASTIME ···› Chair races
- NUMBER OF PACKETS OF KOREAN STARCRAFT CHIPS ···› 35
- NUMBER OF COYOTES KILLED BY RECEPTIONIST ···› 1
- SIZE OF ORC STANDING IN RECEPTION AREA ···› 6'

GameScan

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ... ?

WARCRAFT ADVENTURES

Developer ···› Blizzard
Publisher ···› Blizzard
The Story ···› Set in the *Warcraft* universe, *Warcraft Adventures* was a departure from the RTS gameplay into the world of adventure gaming. Incredible animated cutscenes impressed all who saw them, but Blizzard found they hacked off more than they could chew.
Status ···› *Warcraft Adventures* was unceremoniously dumped. Before the body was cold, rumors circulated that unused cinemas would show up in an animated movie. It didn't happen and Blizzard consigned them "to the archives."

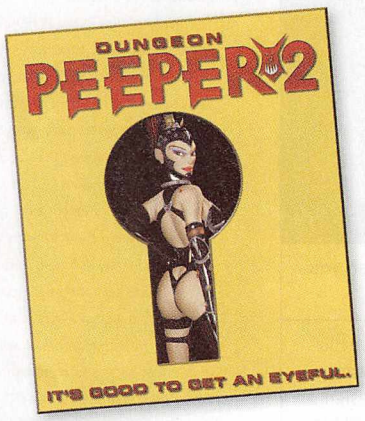
X-COM ALLIANCE

Developer ···› Microprose
Publisher ···› Hasbro
The Story ···› During 1998's E3, Microprose proudly announced a new *X-COM* game using the *Unreal* engine, letting everyone know that this definitely wouldn't be another turn-based strategy game. Fighting aliens in first-person, the game starts with the player searching for lost technology left behind at the end of the first alien war in *X-COM: UFO Defense*. The *Unreal* engine guaranteed stunning graphics ...
Status ···› ... and guaranteed that the project was doomed, just like all the other games set to use the *Unreal* engine. After Microprose went to the big developer in the sky, Hasbro automatically gained the rights, where they still languish.

Fake ads even *we* wouldn't print

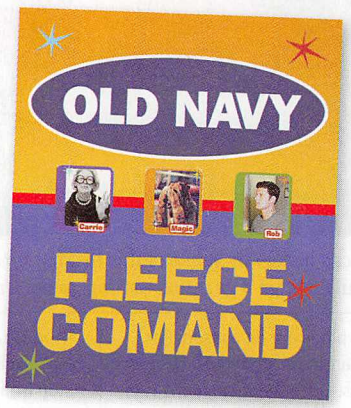
UM ... BUT WE'RE SHOWING THEM TO YOU NOW ... IN PRINT ... YEAH

Every so often, we'll write something so heinous, so insulting, so oh-god-we're-gonna-lose-our-jobs-worthy that it never sees the light of day. (Hard to believe, huh?) That's what happened to the following fake ad ideas. They so disturbed somebody — but not just one person, each idea offended some part of a different staffer's sensibilities — that we vowed never, ever to show them to anybody. So, here they are.



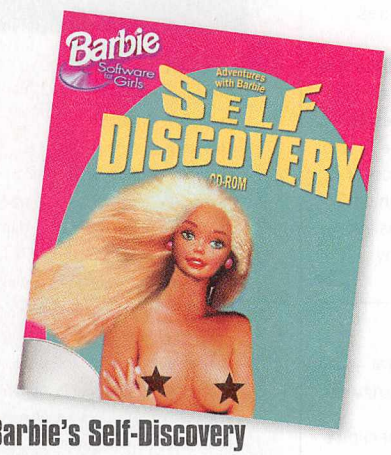
Dungeon Peeper

SAMPLE TEXT ···› "It's good to get an eyeful."
REASON PULLED ···› An idea we pulled out of our asses in desperation ... and it showed
OFFENSIVENESS RATING ···› Medium for mediocrity



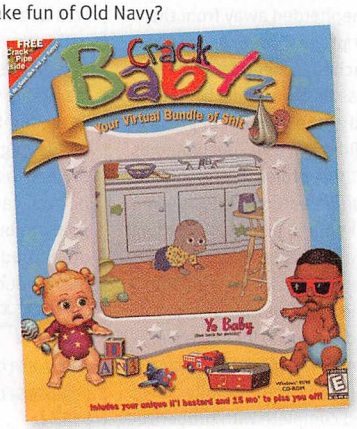
Old Navy's Fleece Command

SAMPLE TEXT ···› "Join Magic and that old bag with the big glasses in the best sheep combat simulation ever made"
REASON PULLED ···› Brilliant concept, difficult execution (and Morgan Fairchild is pricey as hell)
OFFENSIVENESS RATING ···› Low — who doesn't like to make fun of Old Navy?



Barbie's Self-Discovery

SAMPLE TEXT ···› "There are all kinds of wonderful secrets hidden under Barbie's panties"
REASON PULLED ···› Mattel would sue our butts into the next millennium. Nobody messes with the pink lady's pink parts
OFFENSIVENESS RATING ···› Low, unless you're a Mattel executive



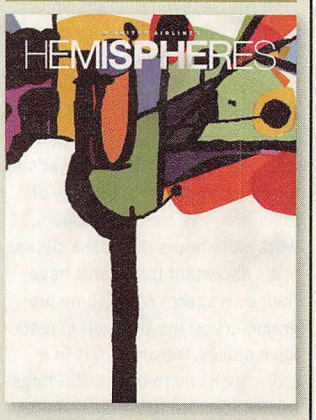
Crackbabyz

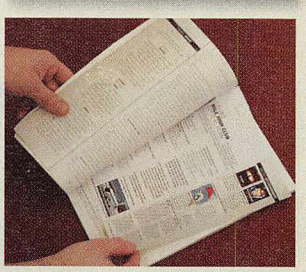
SAMPLE TEXT ···› "Mommy's gone to that big crack-house in the sky! Time to tickle, rock, and hold your Crackbabyz ... in the time they have left"
REASON PULLED ···› Judged "not funny" by some, but probably because they're one of the millions currently abusing the substance we like to call crack
OFFENSIVENESS RATING ···› As high as the mama

FUN WITH MAGS ···›

Did you ever wonder what would happen if the editors of **PCXL** had a chance to work at other magazines? Well, wonder no longer. As a new feature in **PCXL** we'll include a page of stories and articles that will look exactly like those from some other popular (and sometimes not so popular) magazine. We hope these stories will shock, scare, and surprise the hell out of their normal readers. But we need your help. All we ask of you, our loyal readers, is to take this page and stick it into the appropriate magazine. Hilarity will surely ensue. Get a picture of a shocked reader and we'll even give you a prize of some type.

THIS MONTH ···› United Airlines' *Hemispheres* Magazine
DESIRED EFFECT ···› To scare the crap out of travelers
POSSIBLE SIDE-EFFECTS ···› Especially nervous passengers might not find the humor very ... uhh ... humorous





www.DailyRadar.com
Dear Mattel, Old Navy, and any crackbabies who might be reading this, please don't sue us

UNITED MILE HIGH CLUB OFFICIAL FORM

So you want to join the notorious United Mile High Club? What follows is a questionnaire which, if completed correctly, will allow you to become one of the few and the proud. Official members will receive a laminated card, a T-Shirt, and double miles on all domestic United Flights.

1. Sex
- ❑ Yes, please (go to 2)
- ❑ Male (go to 2)
- ❑ Female (go to 8)

2. Why do you want to join the United Mile High Club?
- ❑ To brag to my friends
- ❑ I just like to join clubs
- ❑ Not having any luck on the ground
- ❑ I love to fly and it shows (go to 10)

3. You are traveling with ...
- ❑ Your wife (go to 4)
- ❑ A hooker (go to 9)
- ❑ Your boss (go to 10)
- ❑ Yourself (go to 5)

4. How would you describe your wife in aeronautical terms?
- ❑ High mileage (go to 8)
- ❑ First Class (go to 10)
- ❑ Frequent Flyer (go to 8)
- ❑ A flotation device (go to 5)

5. Which of the following celebrities do you most resemble?
- ❑ Louie Anderson (go to 6)
- ❑ Carrot Top (go to 6)
- ❑ Ricky Martin (go to 11)
- ❑ Donald Trump (go to 7)

6. How about your equipment?
- ❑ Flight ready (go to 7)
- ❑ Cockpitiful (go to 10)
- ❑ Well Hung Glider (go to 7)

7. Are you filthy rich?
- ❑ Yes (go to 8)
- ❑ No (go to 10)

8. Which of the following do you (or your wife) find most romantic?
- ❑ Slow passionate love in a comfortable environment and no cold steel on my buttcheeks (go to 10)
- ❑ In the galley, on top of a can of half-used tomato juice (go to 9)
- ❑ On top of a toilet (go to 9)
- ❑ In the cockpit (female applicants go to 12, male go to hell)

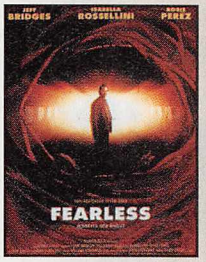
9. Congratulations, you are now qualified to join the exclusive Mile High Club. Wait until the plane reaches at least 5280 feet, then find a semi-private location and take it in for a landing

10. We regret to inform you that you are either too fat, ugly, dumb, poor, or otherwise desirable to have any chance of joining our exclusive club. If we let your kind in then we wouldn't be so exclusive. Your only hope is to make a "solo flight" until you become rich or meet the wrong woman.

11. Hand in your application to the first available stewardess and she will make the necessary arrangements.

12. Come to the cockpit immediately and we will "take care of you."

UNITED ENTERTAINMENT



Fearless [V] [PC]
Watch in terror as Rosie Perez and Jeff Bridges survive one of the most graphic plane crashes in the history of movies, then go insane anyway.

Air Force One [V] [PD]
Even the safest plane in the world isn't completely safe. Harrison Ford beats up bad guys and performs completely unrealistic aerial maneuvers in one of the most trite thrillers to hit movie screens in years.

Airplane! [V] [N] [PC] [AF] [J]
Classic comedy in the air with Leslie Nielsen in his most touching role to date. Follow the madcap story of a near tragic plane crash and see Beaver Cleaver's mom translate "jive."

All films have been edited for airline use (i.e., we've taken out all of the interesting bits). For those sad people who still might have a problem we've included this guide to bad things we left in.

[V] *Violence*
[PC] *Plane Crash*
[PD] *Plane Danger*
[AF] *Airplane Food*
[J] *Jive*
[N] *Nudity*

Beverages
Alcohol may be served to passengers (and crew members) over 21 only (though we never really check IDs). In accordance with FAA rules, we may not serve alcohol to passengers who have already started hitting on ugly flight attendants or telling the guy in the seat next to him, "I love you man" — it is for your own safety. We also cannot let you bring your own alcohol on board (unless you have enough to share with the crew).

Drinking Games
It's a long flight, and it's pretty damn boring up in the air. What better way to pass the time than some good old fashioned drinking games? Learn the rules, get a butt-load of "mini's," and play along with the pilots and this trip may be your best yet.

Chicken or Beef
What it is: You are chicken and your friend is beef. For each selection of chicken you take a shot and for each selection of beef he takes a shot. Pilots have enjoyed this one for years.

Baby Cry
What it is: Every time an annoying brat starts yapping, the group takes a shot. Eventually, parents will find a way to shut up little Ed Asner, just to stop you from drinking.

The Scavenger Hunt
What it is: The first to find one of the following items can order someone else to drink: Fat salesman, guy with laptop, idiot on the plane phone saying, "You'll never guess where I'm calling from," a nervous grandma, a stewardess under 30, a guy hiding a copy of *Swank* inside an in-flight magazine.

Logo Branding!

Nothing says company pride like a logo on the forehead of your dog. You can even brand your wife's ass. We'll put it anywhere you want it!

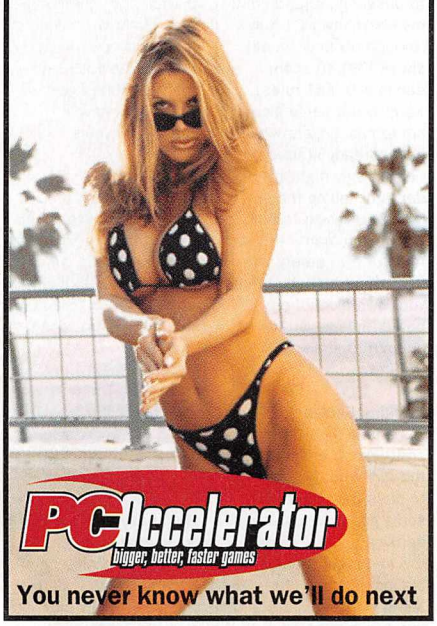
CUSTOMIZED! FULL COLOR! ANY SIZE!
Doesn't cause (too much) pain — scars permanently — and it's pretty darn safe

Send your size, color logo, TM, mascot, artwork, photo that you want produced along with the person or animal you want to brand to

All Dogs Go To Heaven
3000 Retriever Lane, ste 201

Allow 4 to 6 weeks for branding iron to arrive

And now for something completely different...

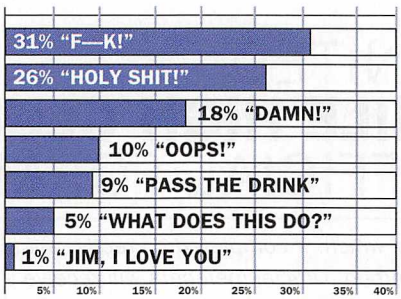


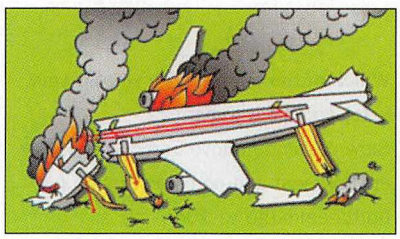
PCAccelerator
bigger, better, faster games

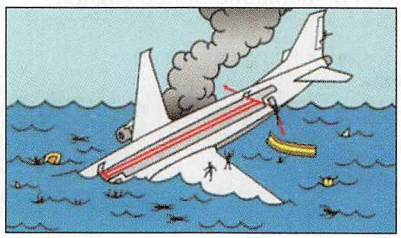
You never know what we'll do next

THE **LAST** WORD

As an exclusive to *Hemispheres* magazine we got a chance to listen to all of the black box recordings for flights that weren't as fortunate as the one you are on (we hope). Here is what people say just before the loud boom and screams of terror and chaos. Enjoy!







THE **ONBOARD** NUISANCE

Flights can be sooo boring. Here are a few tricks that'll make your next flight a little more interesting.

CRYING WOLF

What it is: Sit down in your seat as usual and as soon as the pilot comes on the speaker and says, "My name is ..." you stand up, shreik, and run off the plane yelling, "Oh good God no! Not him again!"

Why it's funny: People are still really nervous about flying and any little thing tends to set them off. It's especially fun if it makes someone in first class stain their shorts.

CALL WAITING

What it is: Once the plane takes off, press the little stewardess button. Before she comes to serve you (which usually takes about 45 minutes) turn it off. When she walks by, giggle like you've got fairies in your shorts. Repeat.

Why it's funny: It's not really, but if you do it right, the old bird will get so pissed she'll pop her dentures and that's funny as hell.

A LITTLE "TOO" CLOSE

What it is: Right from the beginning of the flight, start nuzzling the guy or girl next to you. Don't go too far or they'll kick you off the plane. Just casually rub them and drool a little on their arm while you are faking sleep.

Why it's funny: People on planes are sensitive about the one micron of personal space they get and any invasion of this holy ground causes them great discomfort. And if you ask us, discomfort is funny.

WHAT **THAT GUY** SITTING NEXT TO YOU **JUST DID** IN **THE BATHROOM ...**

People always talk about the elusive "Mile High Club," for passengers who really take to the friendly skies. However in our experience at United, the only people getting laid on flights are the pilots ... but we aren't supposed to talk about that. However there is still a Mile High Club, which consists of perverted men, some lotion, and some really funny looking faces. Ever since we installed the webcam in all of our bathrooms we've come to realize how sick, wrong, and profitable people really are. So next time the guy next to you offers to share his nuts with you, do yourself a favor and think twice.

Glamour in the Slammer 2

IT WOULD BE A CRIME NOT TO CHECK 'EM OUT

A little over a year ago, the staff of **PCXL** went to great lengths, researching a growing new dating resource for busy gamers: Jailbabes.com. The concept was simple: Just send a letter and you may snag the cream of the crop in the American penal system.

Since our last report, many of the best candidates have been released, paroled, or have escaped. So, as a service to our loyal, and occasionally horny readers, we've returned to find the best in modern jailbirds. You better act fast — their cellmates are looking better and better with each passing hour.

JANNA

RELEASE DATE ···› 1/01
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Attempting to "relocate" from prison
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 9
QUOTE ···› I enjoy sexy, romantic interludes, candlelight dinners and am willing to relocate if necessary
OUR THOUGHTS ···› She won't be doing any relocating soon

VALENTINA

RELEASE DATE ···› 8/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› "Makin' Kool-Aid"
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 7
QUOTE ···› I can write things that will put a big "kool-aid" smile on your face
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Either that or they'll make you want to run through a wall

BARRILEE

RELEASE DATE ···› 2/07
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Following her "nature"'
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 7
QUOTE ···› Natural Born Killer — Wild, out of control, sassy, sexy, fearless female with a model figure looking for similar individuals
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Uh, could you repeat that first part again?

MICHELLE W.

RELEASE DATE ···› 3/01
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Sweatin' with the Oldies (for money)
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 3
QUOTE ···› I enjoy all sports, camping, fishing, horseback riding, water sports and most of all, I love to sweat
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Mmm, perspiration, the sexiest secretion

MICHELLE

RELEASE DATE ···› 5/01
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Charging for Ice-Cream
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 0
QUOTE ···› My fantasy is to be made into a sundae and to be eaten
OUR THOUGHTS ···› No thanks, too fattening

LISA

RELEASE DATE ···› 7/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Failure to Return Videos
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 6
QUOTE ···› A nude jacuzzi is MMMMM good, and I love to watch movies while having sex
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Won't the usher catch us?

CELESTE

RELEASE DATE ···› 5/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Serving "alcohol" to minor
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 6
QUOTE ···› I am light and bubbly with a splash of wild and kinky
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Add a touch of vermouth and you've got a Jailbird smoothie

FIDELIA

RELEASE DATE ···› 5/03
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Giving people the willies
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 0
QUOTE ···› I am over 50, friendly, outgoing, open minded, warm, kind hearted, caring and willing to ... (If you want me to)
OUR THOUGHTS ···› No, nooooo! We don't want you to do anything!

APRIL

RELEASE DATE ···› 9/01
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Animal Endangerment
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 4
QUOTE ···› I am really into nature and S&M
OUR THOUGHTS ···› If you like squirrels in leather ... she's your girl

SHERIE

RELEASE DATE ···› 10/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Pool hustling or maybe just hustling
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 8
QUOTE ···› I love animals, going to the beach or river, playing pool and oh yeah — sex, sex, sex, and more sex
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Did you catch the subtle reference to sex?

MELISSA

RELEASE DATE ···› 7/01
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Bad Grammar
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 8
QUOTE ···› I am also sophisticated and conversative [sic] and into the arts
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Sophisticated *and* "conversative"? You rarely find that in a girl

BRENDA

RELEASE DATE ···› 12/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Treating an undercover cop like a "monarch"
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 3
QUOTE ···› I want a man who loves to be treated like a king. One who will get a little wild and kinky and enjoys bondage during sex
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Marv Albert: We found your dream woman

JENNIFER

RELEASE DATE ···› 10/09
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Eating an undercover officer
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 0
QUOTE ···› Me and my 44F's are in the need of a companion to help keep us together while incarcerated.
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Only a bear trap would keep her 44F's together

BRENDALEE

RELEASE DATE ···› 7/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Go ahead, guess
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 1
QUOTE ···› I have a butt that will make you appreciate the letters "K" and "Y"
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Yeah, you can't spell YUCK without "K" and "Y"

ELAINE

RELEASE DATE ···› 8/04
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Naptime violations at a retirement community
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 0
QUOTE ···› I am loving, fun, kinky, romantic, and highly intelligent.
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Somewhere there's a kid whose grandma describes herself as "kinky" — yuk

TAMRIKA

RELEASE DATE ···› 12/00
MOST LIKELY REASON FOR INCARCERATION ···› Mixing metaphors
PCXL INTEREST GAUGE ···› 7
QUOTE ···› I am a Hershey's Kiss and M & M's all in one because I want to melt in your mouth — not your hands
OUR THOUGHTS ···› Our readers would rather her be a Twix bar (Sweet chocolate with a little cracker inside)

www.PCXL.com
Jailbabes are not only available, but probably used to a little girl-on-girl action

A LOOK BACK ...

Much has changed in the past century and **PCXL** has been through it all. Here's a glimpse of our pages 100 years ago this month.

PC ACCELE-RATOR

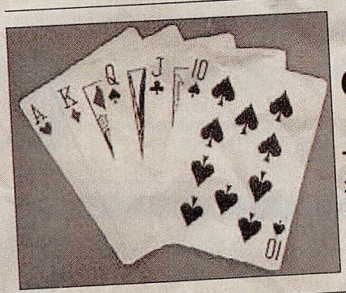
APRIL 1, 1900 PARLOR CONTEST ACCELE-RATOR IS ANOTHER FINE MAGAZINE FROM THE MAKERS OF HORSE-SHOE GAMER

GAMES TO WOO THE LADIES

In this, the fourth month of a glorious new century, it has come to the attention of man-kind that woman-kind is not "putting out" in a pleasing fashion. Thus, PCXL has conceived the top 10 games that may politely urge female acquaintances to part with their bloomers and encourage interaction with the male "friends."

NUMBER ONE: STRIP POKER

As scandalous as it might sound, petticoats will fly off in a ribald nature during this most naughty of card competitions. Praise be to the Holy Spirits of grain and barley that such an evening is possible. (kindly turn to page two)



THE CARD!

This month it's the 10 of Spades. Only another 37 issues and you'll have a complete deck!

PRE-VIEWS

REAL TOURNAMENT

Have a great row with the lads using slingshots, spears, and fire-arms ... the winner retains both eyes and all limbs.

EXTREME HORSE-PLAY

Jocularity reaches new heights, as this game will surely give you a queer tingle in the extremities.

FUTURE RACE

Though the notion of a horseless carriage defies God's Divine Laws Of Nature, this racing game of the future looks like ripping good fun.

TECH-PHILES

U.S. AUTOMATON'S CAN AND STRING WONDER

The act of game-playing may be invigorated by this new mecha-nism by which two parties may converse yet stand very far apart. Our laborious tests included much ball-playing and rough-housing, resulting in the lamentable breaking of the string. A pox on the makers of this Nancy device, we say!

Rating: 1

RE-VIEWS

SIM STEEL MAGNATE

This mild entertainment left me gay as a China-man in a rice paddy. Not since Sim Orphanage or the occasional loosening of my lady's petticoat have such palpitations engulfed my joyous heart. (please do turn to page three)

PLAY BY PLAY

Fair-skinned men cannot jump as high as the Negro whilst engaging in basket-ball, says our intrepid sports reporter. (Full account on page three)

X-TRA

John Romero claims mystery past-time 'Daikatana' will be released this Christmas. Opium-addled PCXL editor says it will be "the best game of 1900."

Women We Would Like To Play If We Weren't So Inhibited – Lithographs of Ida McKinley, the wife of our great President, baring her ankle.

"The Japanese will one day lead the Earth in amusements" and other jests by our group of fun-loving scoundrels can be found on page three.

FEEDBACK

According to our noble readers, PCXL has kicked large voluminous buttocks. We are truly humbled.

www.DailyRadar.com

Actually, Ida McKinley was an invalid by this time and we don't imagine her ankles were too sexy

FEEDBACK

letters@pcxl.com

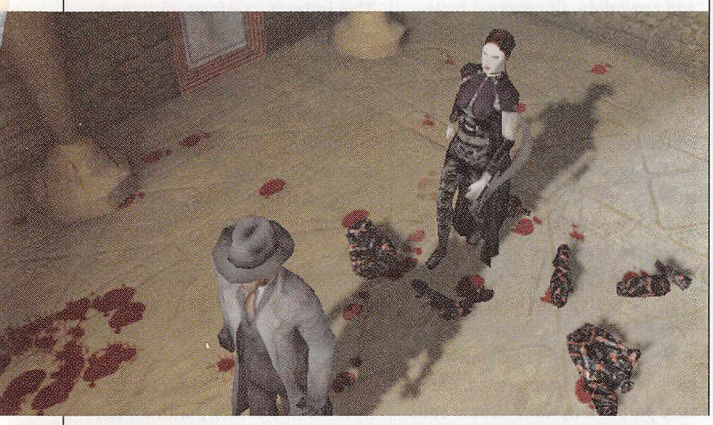
The fallout from Gia's booty-shakin' continues, but the biggest trend is a big ol' Coconut Monkey-sized increase in anti-*PC Gamer* sentiments. What happened? Somebody force you guys to read "Dear Greg"? But, some readers actually wrote in about games! Is John Romero now Eidos' bitch? Does "Ass. Art Director" Eric really live with a girl? We give you all the answers right here ... But if you've got your own burning questions, pop us an e-mail at letters@pcxl.com

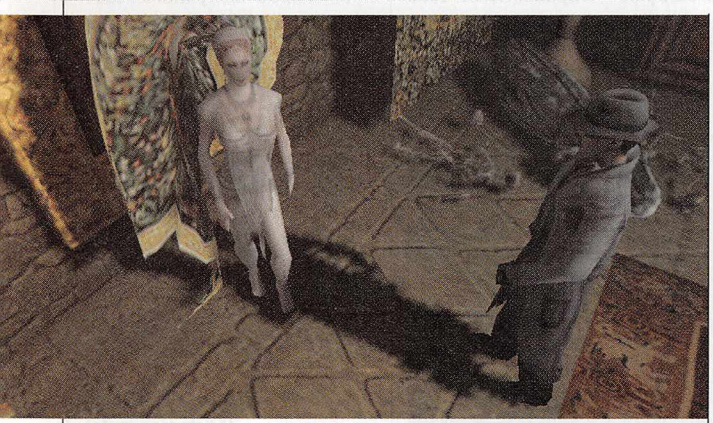
TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction in regard to your article "A Game Geek's Guide to Getting Girls." Although I do approve of your use of a scantily-clad model in the layout, I disapprove of no mention of the female vampire's nipples in experiment four (*Nocturne*). The female half vampiress (what's-her-name ...) is wearing a transparent top with her nipples gloriously outlined and colored a wonderful shade of luscious pink! It is the perfect subliminal "let's get naked" screen activity which will inevitably lead to game geek's big score! I forgive you though, I know you mean well. I am a beer-swilling game geek, and RPG addict who actually scores with chicks, so anytime you need some advice let me know ... Props to Gia's ass! That is one fine booty ...

David Berger

So, you say you're an "RPG addict who actually scores with chicks"? Funny, we thought that was an oxymoron, kinda like "military intelligence."





If you can see the luscious pink nipples in these pics, then you're holding the magazine too close to your face.

LET THE ASS-KISSING BEGIN

A few months ago, I was receiving *PC Games*, some piss-off mag. But now I receive PCXL, which is far superior than *PCG*. Now I have everything I want: Beer, PCXL, and Girls. Why? Because this new mag includes them all, I read game reviews, look at babes, drink beer, and enjoy the mag — all in one! You guys are incredible! Keep it up!!!

Victor Delgado

That's **PCXL** — bringing gamers, babes, and beer closer together.

STUPID CANADIAN TRICKS

Dear PCXL,

I've been reading your magazine for a while now and it's some kinda wonderful — it pretty much whips the llama's ass. Anyways I was in a bookstore (kinda like Barnes and Noble 'cept it's totally screwed up in Canada) and being the faithful reader that I was, I noticed a copy of *PC Gamer* (evil, right?) and I saw it was blocking your magazine along with a nice copy of *Maxim*. This did not look good (the *PC Gamer*, that is) so I rearranged the order and now PCXL was in da front and I did so with the other copies, too. Just thought I'd share that with you. P.S. Canadian beer deserves more respect. Yankee sluts.

Canadian Mountie

Excellent work! And we agree — Canadian beer does deserve more respect. When we're in the mood for a brew light on flavor and heavy on the bitter aftertaste of moose piss, we think of Canada.

HOSTILE TAKEOVER

Okay, Eidos buys 51% of Ion Storm. Does that mean Eidos made Romero their bitch?

skinnyhippie

Yes. In fact, the guys at Eidos told him not to cut his long, flowing hair because it "makes his mouth look real purty-like."

EVIL PORTS

PCXL,

As a new subscriber, I just wanted to say that you guys have a great magazine. Have a question for you: Will Capcom port any other *Resident Evil* games to PC?

Thanks,

Jeff (last name withheld)

Well, Mr. Withheld, Capcom is tight-lipped about its plans for any ports after *Resident Evil 2*, but our pick is *RE: Code Veronica's Closet*. Zombies in silk teddies, ambiguously gay prey, and Dan Cortez' head on a spike — it can't miss.

HINTS R US

Please send me the complete solution of the game *Voyeur* (Interplay) and *Alfred Pelrock* (Digital Dreams Multimedia, a Spanish company). I am stuck.

Thank you very much, from Argentina.

Fernando J. Giordano

Solution: Hit Escape, quit game, uninstall game, smash game CDs into a thousand pieces, buy good games instead of crap games. We hope this helps.

HALO, NURSE!

In your "Death of the PC" article in the February issue of PCXL you have a caption, "Scenes from *Halo* and *TF2* — Two games you wont [sic] be seeing on a console anytime soon ... if ever." Well, you're wrong! It was just confirmed that *Halo* will be released for the PlayStation 2. I love picking out all of the inconsistencies and blatant untruths in your magazine, not to mention the typos

Toasty

The PlayStation 2 won't be out for several more months and seeing as how you might die before its release, you won't be seeing *Halo* on a console anytime soon ... if ever. We stand by our caption. (And by the way, "won't" has an apostrophe in it, and sentences end with a period.)

letters@pcxl.com

FEEDBACK

STAMP OF APPROVAL

Dear PCXL,
Simply put, your mag rocks. Other mags suck. Because your mag is smart, yet funny, I'll never switch back. Your subscription prices beat all others. Heck, your subscription renewal envelope doesn't even require a stamp, it's prepaid! *PC Gamer*'s envelopes require a stamp, which made me storm around my house angrily to find a freakin' 33 cent piece of paper! But not any more. Thank you PCXL.

Jeff Guth

Here, use one of ours. You may not have any fun reading *PC Gamer*, but at least you can have fun subscribing to it.

UGP REUNION?

PCXL,
Next time one of the writers decides to leave PCXL, why not replace them with some ex-*Ultra Game Players* writers? You all work for Imagine, right? *UGP* was the only magazine that was even close to as cool as PCXL. Of course having Bill Donahue, Frank O'Connor, Roger whatever-his-name-was-I-never-liked-him-anyway and Fran Reyes reunited with Mike might just be too much talent in one place. By the way, the one issue Bill wrote with you guys was the greatest ever ...

ZZTrash

Too much talent in one place is what sunk *UGP* in the first place. We're sticking with the low-paid, no-talent staff we have now and rise to the top!

FROM THE MOUTH OF MADNESS

hello, I am starting a gaming group. I need some help with getting "stuff" from companys for we can review. Can you help?

MADness

No, you're beyond help.

LED ASTRAY

In your January 'oo issue, some dork named Marc Saltzman reviewed *Driver*, and gave it an eight (eight!!!!!) That piece of crap, assorific, dung-heap of a game didn't deserve a three!! This guy is not only clearly on crack but IS LEADING YOUR LOYAL GAMING COMMUNITY ASTRAY! Please, I beg of you, make reparations for this atrocity before it's too late! Warn readers that Marc is a crack-whore-wannabe and his reviews, like his brain, are tainted by some bad smack he picked up in Amsterdam. I should know, I was there, and I tried to warn him about the brown shit but he just wouldn't listen. Under no circumstances should anyone buy this assalicious game.

Joel Hunter
Loyal Reader

Marc isn't just a dork, he's a Canadian Dork who's in big f—king trouble for not taking us to Amsterdam with him.

PANTY UP

What's up guys? I was playing *Wheel of Time* and just happened to look down when I was in a room with a reflective floor. And what did I see? The black panties of Elayna. (Or is she not a natural blonde?) Just thought I would let you know.

Chris Kohlhagen

No, she's not a natural blonde ... because she's a VIDEOGAME CHARACTER. By the way, that could be the saddest, most depraved thing we've ever heard of — well done.

CRACK WHORES

I just finished reading the "Death of the PC" article (P. 100). The very thought of games like *Deer Hunter II 3D* (and Rosie's big ass) make me want to wretch. I have to admit, I may know a possible source of trouble in the industry. Now I am not naming any names but ... I just happen to know a rather large group of individuals who ALWAYS have the latest "hardcore" games. How can they afford so many great titles you might ask? Well ... What happens most times is this: One person buys it, a crack is found, the CD is then copied and distributed freely and copiously. Of course, I have NEVER partaken of the forbidden fruit myself. Nonetheless, I am sure this is not an isolated situation. Maybe it's time we make a collective call for people to PAY for the great games we all love. Now there is a caveat there ... There are probably a lot of people out there who buy games that don't read your fine periodical (I know — perish the thought). These gaming fools walk into a store a make a bad decision based solely on economics. I am sure part of why *Deer Hunter* sells a lot of units is because it's cheap. Everyone I speak to says they would pay for every game they have if it weren't $50+ a pop. Maybe if publishers could lower prices (on the good games) then they could get more units sold.

Greg

It's a circular argument, Greg. If the scum-sucking low-lifes who steal games off the web actually paid for them, then publishers wouldn't need to charge high prices for the "good" ones. Good games usually (but not always) require more time, money, and work put into them than a $19.95 pile of dung ... and no publisher can be expected to put out high quality products if they're getting robbed blind.

MR. SMITH GOES TO HELL

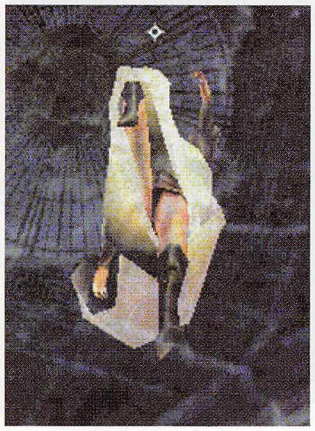
Dear PCXL,
This letter is to inform your readers that *PC Accelerator* has no respect for human decency. The magazine will stop at nothing to entertain and condones murder and psychological torture. PCXL destroys families!!!

The matter to which I am referring involves your newly promoted Art Director, Eric Smith, who is a bastard. He killed my mother just to create the disturbing images for this issue's feature on *The Sims*.

Everything in my life was just fine — I had a family with a beautiful mother, two swell kids and a pretty decent, although unemployed father. Next thing I know, I come home from work to find that my mother is lying, starved to death, in a puddle of her own pee-pee. She was killed by Smith's alter ego "BOB, JUST BOB" while I was away. If it weren't for PCXL's totally amoral attitude towards magazine publishing, my mother would still be flirting and dancing and juggling like before. To hell with you bastards!

Elisabeth Dubin
(Eric's roommate)

Damn, that boy deserves a raise.



Proof that Chris Kohlhagen needs to get out more ...

www.DailyRadar.com

Gaming 411

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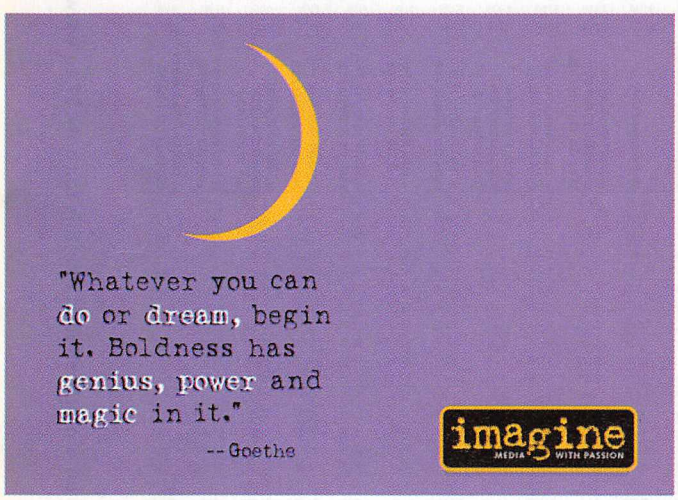


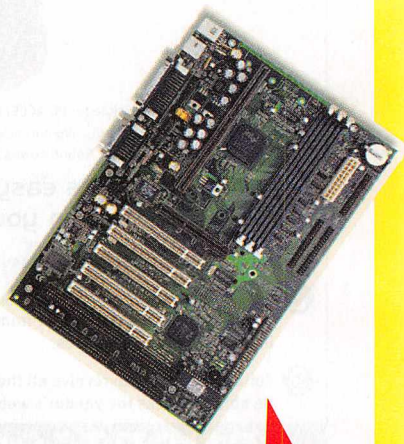
ABERDEEN

The Straight Talk People℠

MOTHERBOARD GEEK HEAVEN!

Super7™

	Part Number	Chip Set	L2 Cache (KB)	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	72-pin SIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD-K6®-2/450 with 3DNow!™	w/AMD-K6-2/500	w/AMD-K6-2/550	w/AMD-K6-III/400	w/Intel® Pentium® MMX™ 233MHz
Asus P5A-B	MB5711	ALi Aladdin V	512	384	3		Award			3	2	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$92	$151	$160	$222	$177	$137
EPoX EP-MVP3C2	MB5406	VIA Apollo MVP3	512	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	4	2	1	Baby AT	2 Yrs.	$83	$142	$151	$213	$168	$128
EPoX EP-MVP3G5	MB5405	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$114	$173	$182	$244	$199	$159
FIC PA-2013 (2MB Cache)	MB5214	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award			4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$103	$162	$171	$233	$188	$148
FIC VA-503+	MB5211	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	512	2	4	Award			3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$79	$138	$147	$209	$164	$124
FIC VA-503A	MB5212	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	768	3		Award	ESS	UltraDMA/66	4	1	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$87	$146	$155	$217	$172	$132
Shuttle HOT-591P	MB5611	VIA Apollo MVP3	512	256	2	2	Award			3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$78	$137	$146	$208	$163	$123
Tyan S1590S Trinity 100AT	MB5006	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	384	3	2	Award			4	4	1	Mini AT	3 Yrs.	$95	$154	$163	$225	$180	$140
Tyan S1598 Trinity ATX	MB5008	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$121	$180	$189	$251	$206	$166



Slot A

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Bus Frequency	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD Athlon™ 600MHz	w/AMD Athlon 650MHz	w/AMD Athlon 700MHz	w/AMD Athlon 750MHz	w/AMD Athlon 800MHz	w/AMD Athlon 850MHz
AMI Megathon	MB7301	AMD-751 / VIA 686A	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$177	$407	$437	$487	$597	$787	$1047
Asus K7M	MB7701	AMD-751 / VIA 686A	768	3	Award	100/120/133	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$167	$397	$427	$477	$587	$777	$1037
EPoX EP-K7VA	MB7850	VIA Apollo KX133	768	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$199	$429	$459	$509	$619	$809	$1069
FIC SD11	MB7401	AMD-751 / VIA 686A	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$139	$369	$399	$449	$559	$749	$1009
GVC QS750	MB7601	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$139	$369	$399	$449	$559	$749	$1009
Microstar MS-6167	MB7201	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$166	$396	$426	$476	$586	$776	$1036
Shuttle AI61	MB7901	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5	0	1	MicroATX	1 Yr.	$135	$365	$395	$445	$555	$745	$1005

Socket 370

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Video	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	AMR Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Celeron™ processor 466MHz 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 500/A 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 533/A 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 566 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 600 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Celeron 600 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium® III 550E 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 600E/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 667 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 733 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 800/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB
ABIT BP6 (Dual)	MB6506	Intel 440BX	768	3	Award			5	2	1		ATX	1 Yr.	$144	$233	$257	$299	$344	$364	$584	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EPoX EP-3VBA2 (3VCA)	MB6854	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97		4	1	1	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$120	$209	$233	$275	$320	$340	N/A	$350	$410	$520	$660	$890
SuperMicro 370SCD	MB6159	Intel® 820	512	2	AMI	AC-97		5		1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$149	$238	$262	$304	$349	$369	N/A	$379	$439	$549	$689	$919
SuperMicro 370SEA	MB6140	Intel 810e	512	2	AMI	Intel 810e	Intel 810e	6	1		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$134	$223	$247	$289	$334	$354	N/A	$364	$424	$534	$674	$904
SuperMicro 370SWD	MB6139	Intel 810	512	2	AMI	Intel 810	Intel 810	3			1	Micro ATX	1 Yr.	$119	$208	$232	$274	$319	$339	N/A	$349	N/A	N/A	$659	N/A
Tyan S1857 Trinity 371	MB6017	Intel 440BX	768	3	AMI			6	1	1		ATX	3 Yrs.	$105	$194	$218	$260	$305	$325	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tyan S1854 Trinity 400	MB6018	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award			6	1	1		ATX	3 Yrs.	$111	$200	$224	$266	$311	$331	N/A	$341	$401	$511	$651	$881

Slot 1

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin RIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Pentium III® processor 533EB MHz 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 550 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 600E/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 650 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 700 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 733 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 750 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 800/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 866 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Pentium III 850 256K OD 100MHz FSB
ABIT BE6-II	MB6508	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$147	N/A	$377	$437	$522	$642	N/A	$777	$917	N/A	N/A
ABIT BF6	MB6507	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award			6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$122	N/A	$352	$412	$497	$617	N/A	$752	$892	N/A	N/A
ABIT VA6	MB6509	VIA Apollo Pro 133	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$90	$320	$320	$380	$465	$585	$630	$720	$860	$1020	N/A
Asus P2B98-DS	MB6707	Intel 440BX	1024	4		Award			4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$469	N/A	$699	$759	$844	$964	N/A	$1099	$1239	N/A	$2289
Asus P2B-B	MB6714	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award			4	2	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$139	N/A	$369	$429	$514	$634	N/A	$769	$909	N/A	N/A
Asus P3B-F	MB6720	Intel 440BX	1024	4		Award			6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$143	N/A	$373	$433	$518	$638	N/A	$773	$913	N/A	N/A
Asus P3C2000	MB6722	Intel 820	1024	4		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$169	$399	$399	$459	$544	$664	$709	$799	$939	$1099	N/A
EPoX EP-6VBA2	MB6855	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	4	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$114	$344	$344	$404	$489	$609	$654	$744	$884	$1044	N/A
FIC KA11	MB6411	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	1024	4		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$101	$331	$331	$391	$476	$596	$641	$731	$871	$1031	N/A
Intel CC820	MB6919	Intel 820	512	2		Intel/Phoenix		UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$146	$376	$376	$436	$521	$641	$686	$776	$916	$1076	N/A
Intel VC820	MB6920	Intel 820	512		2	Intel/Phoenix		UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$175	$405	$405	$465	$550	$670	$715	$805	$945	$1105	N/A
Intel SE440BX-2 "Seattle"	MB6921	Intel 440BX	768	3		Intel/Phoenix			4	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$135	N/A	$365	$425	$510	$630	N/A	$765	$905	N/A	N/A
Shuttle AV61	MB6308	VIA Apollo Pro 133	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$81	$311	$311	$371	$456	$576	$621	$711	$851	$1011	N/A
SuperMicro PIIISCD	MB6146	Intel 820	512	2		AMI	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$155	$385	$385	$445	$530	$650	$695	$785	$925	$1085	N/A
SuperMicro PIIISED	MB6142	Intel 810e	512	2		AMI	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	6			ATX	1 Yr.	$130	$360	$360	$420	$505	$625	$670	$760	$900	$1060	N/A
SuperMicro PIIIDME	MB6151	Intel 840	4096	4		AMI	AC-97	Intel PRO/100+	6		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$329	$559	Call	$619	Call	Call	$869	Call	Call	$1259	Call
SuperMicro PIIIDM3	MB6153	Intel 840	4096	4		AMI	AC-97	Adaptec Ultra3/160	6		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$499	N/A	$729	$789	$874	$994	N/A	$1129	$1269	N/A	$2319
SuperMicro P6DGH	MB6129	Intel 440GX	2048	4		AMI		Adaptec 2-Ch U2W	9	2	1	Full AT	1 Yr.	$809	N/A	$1039	$1099	$1184	$1304	N/A	$1439	$1579	N/A	$2629
SuperMicro P6SBA	MB6120	Intel 440BX	768	3		AMI			4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$104	N/A	$334	$394	$479	$599	N/A	$734	$874	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro P6SBU	MB6128	Intel 440BX	1024	4		AMI		Adaptec U2W	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$329	N/A	$559	$619	$704	$824	N/A	$959	$1099	N/A	N/A
Tyan S1854 Trinity 400	MB6018	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$111	$341	$341	$401	$486	$606	$651	$741	$881	$1041	N/A

Slot 2

	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Video	Integrated Controller	Integrated Networking	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 512K	w/Intel Pentium III Xeon processor 550MHz 1024K cache	w/Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 2048K	w/Dual Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 512K	w/Dual Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 1024K	w/Dual Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 2048K	w/Quad Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 512K	w/Quad Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 1024K	w/Quad Intel Pentium III Xeon 550MHz 2048K
AMI MegaPlex II	MB6215	Intel 450NX	4096	16	AMI	2MB ATI				7	1		9U Rack	1 Yr.	$3995	$5095	$6325	$8335	$6195	$8655	$12675	$8395	$13315	$21355
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Too much choice is bad

Choice is bad.

No, I'm not a commie and I haven't been toking on Rob's trusty crackpipe either. I'm not talking about a choice in types of games, I'm talking about choice within games. I'm tired of lazy developers who were afraid to make an artistic decision, so they leave it in the hands of the players. When I pay $50 for a game, I don't want to fiddle with options, sliders, and the like to make it enjoyable. I want a finished game that has the balls to give me the experience the author intended and not weasel out with "but if you don't like our game you can just change the whole damn thing in the options menu" BS.

The open architecture and ability to make mods is brilliant and shouldn't change a bit, but it is the job of the game designer to make choices which are the best for their games. The worst offenders are games that offer both a first- and third-person perspective, even though the game was obviously meant to be played one way or the other. Why leave the decision to us? We're bound to f—k it up and make the wrong choice, thereby making the experience less enjoyable.

Another huge problem is difficulty level. Couldn't the designers balance the game so it is challenging to all levels of gamers? Every time I get a choice I put it on easy and blow through the game. Now I'm not going to go back and play through the game on hard or even medium, and therefore I never got a chance to experience the intense moments of the harder levels. If you suck so bad at games that you can't get through them on medium, then giving you the choice to play on easy is just a crutch. Let's make people improve their game if they want to finish it. If the challenge is harder, then the reward will be greater.

I'm all for different games trying new methods of gameplay, and new levels of difficulty, but I am tired of designers in our industry putting out products that attempt to be all things to all people. Decide what experience you want to provide, and do the work to make it the best possible experience. Giving gamers the choices is just a cop-out for a designer who couldn't make up his mind. It's like a director giving you choices on camera angles and scenes. I want to see the artist's work — not this make-your-own art crap.

— CHOOSY MUTHAS CHOOSE MIKE SALMON

SECOND PERSON

When we were babies, we crapped our pants for fun, got nipples shoved in our face, and ate everything that was big enough to stuff in our mouths. Well, some of us have grown up since then (obviously not all of us, as you've no doubt gathered by now), and we get choices that make life even better. The freedom to choose where to crap, which nipples on which to suck, and what kind of stuff to eat ... choices like these are what makes being a grown-up so good.

The ability to modify and tailor the games we buy to fit our particular tastes is usually what decides whether or not we're going to get our money's worth. There isn't anything more frustrating than not being able to reconfigure keys, adjust the difficulty, or configure the game parameters of your own server. And when dirty, uneducated, crack-smoking commies start saying crap like "choice is bad," it just makes me want to buy 'em a ticket on Dumb-Ass Airlines (non-stop/coach class) to red China — where choice is illegal.

— MATT "WHY AM I STILL THE NEW GUY" HOLMES

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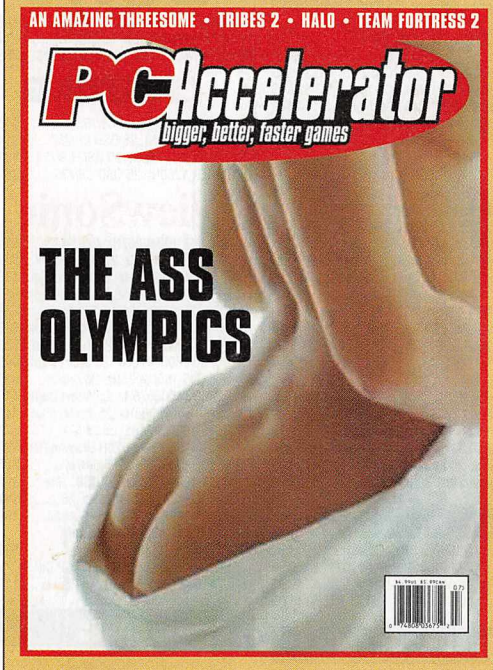
NEXT MONTH?

THE ASS OLYMPICS
We've gathered inept competitors from the four corners of the globe to compete in the ultimate battle. The goal: Flush out the absolutely worst games out there. Events like Incompetence in Graphics and the Bug Hurdle highlight a magnificent melee of asstitude. Don't miss it.



AMAZING THREESOME
Tribes 2, *Team Fortress 2*, and *Halo*. This is one threesome you can't afford to miss (actually there aren't many threesomes we can't recommend).

PREVIEWS THAT'LL MAKE YOUR EYES BLEED
C & C Renegade, *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force*, *Motocross Madness 2*, *Dark Reign 2*, and maybe even one more — if you're really nice.

THE MAKING OF *SNOW ANGELS IN HELL 2*
The *Daikatana* review. Really. We mean it this time. We think.

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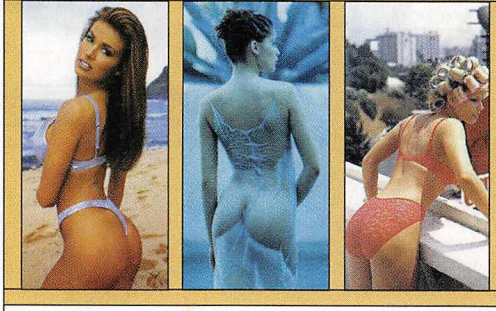
A special look at the women who lead by example. Here are some of those examples ...



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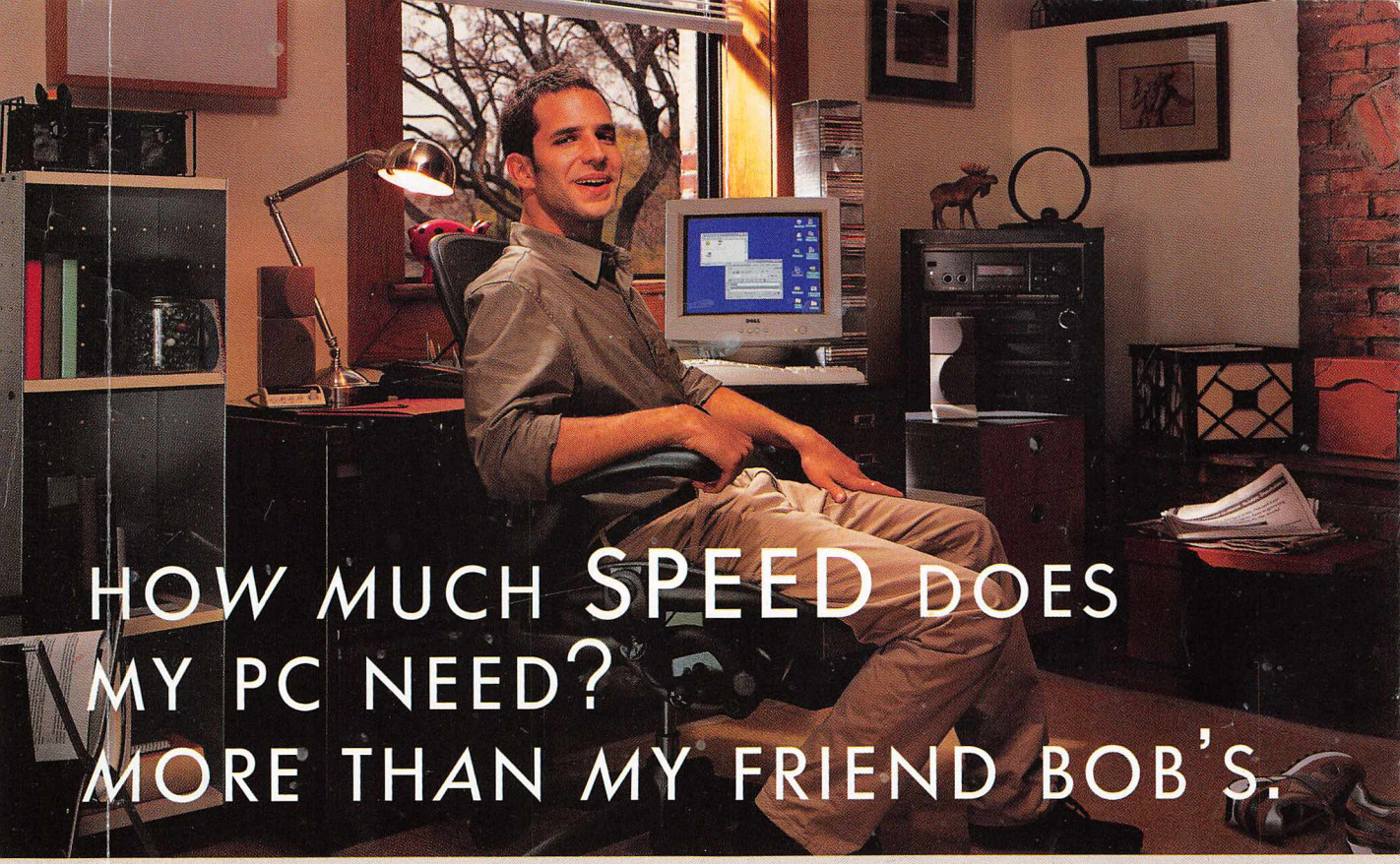

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